Orbis

A Journal of World Affairs

Volume 43, Number 4, Fall 1999

Chester Crocker On Ethnic Conflict

MULTICULTURAL REALITIES

Multiculturalism as Ideology and Fact
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

Civilizations, Cities, and Cultures
William H. McNeill

Multiculturalism in Ancient Times
David Gress

India and China as Opposites
Stanley Wolpert and June Teufel Dreyer

Harvey Sicherman on Holbrooke and Christopher

David Eisenhower on Kissinger

Richard F. Staar on Russia's Rearmament Ambitions

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Multiculturalism in the ascendant. The great mosque of Constantinople built by Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–66) not only reflected the glory of the Ottoman Turkish empire, but also the profound architectural influence of the nearby Christian cathedral Hagia Sophia, built a millennium before by Justinian, in the heyday of the Byzantine Empire. Although authoritarian and bereft of any modern notion of human rights, the Ottoman Empire tolerated—and kept peace among—Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims, Jews, and Christians rather better than prior or subsequent Middle Eastern regimes.

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Editor's Column

Francis Fukuyama, revisiting his provocative thesis regarding "the end of history" in *The National Interest*, now admits that his formulation was in fact wrong—but not for any of the reasons advanced by his critics. Rather, the dialectical movement of history will continue so long as Western science marches on, and will "end" only when and if bioengineering succeeds in altering human nature itself: "the last man in a bottle." At that point the story of *Homo sapiens* will assuredly terminate, and a brave new "post-human" era will commence.[1] Given the progress made toward cloning and test-tube babies, perhaps Gene Rodenberry's original *Star Trek* television series was only a bit premature when its scripts referred to the genetic wars of the 1990s, fought between old-fashioned people and a race of manufactured superhumans. Certainly, as one looks back on the twentieth century, it seems that Aldous Huxley's abundant, indulgent, and bioengineered *Brave New World* is a more likely prophecy than the enforced poverty and merely industrial-age thought control of George Orwell's *1984*. For all his brilliance, what Orwell could not imagine in the late 1940s was that totalitarianism need not be Stalinist, but could end in a "friendly fascism" dispensing untold prosperity and sensual pleasure to the masses—in exchange, of course, for their untidy liberty.

At *Orbis*, however, we shall spurn the temptation to use Y2K as an excuse to speculate about metaphysical millennia, whether utopian or dystopian, or to fabricate "top ten" lists of the past hundred or thousand years. Instead, we ask only what challenges are likely to face American policymakers in the first decade or two of the new century, because laying the foundations for "a generation of peace," to borrow Henry Kissinger's phrase, is the most one can hope to achieve . . . human nature being what it is.

In These Pages

Wise heads, including Samuel Huntington and Irving Kristol, have suggested that the most pressing challenge to U.S. foreign policy in the forthcoming era may be internal. Observing how global rivalry appears to be reconstituting itself along civilizational fault lines, Huntington warned that the West—seemingly hegemonic in the wake of communism's demise—may fail to defend itself and its values abroad if it surrenders to "multiculturalist" attacks on its values at home. Kristol, in turn, identified the most immediate threats to American security as the illegal immigrants and drugs invading the United States

[1] Francis Fukuyama, "Second Thoughts: The Last Man in a Bottle," *The National Interest*, Summer 1999, pp. 16–33.

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from the south, especially from Mexico. Thus, even as American forces intervene worldwide, causing pundits to debate the wisdom of "enlargement" and worry about U.S. relations with China and Russia, it may be that America's future as a superpower will be decided by the outcome of her *domestic* culture wars.

What few "culture warriors" on either side of the trenches recognize, however, is that multiculturalism is not just a slogan of the politically correct, or an ideology, or a social pathology born of careless immigration policies. Multiculturalism is a natural historical phenomenon that has characterized almost every great empire and center of civilization since the beginning of recorded time. Centers of creativity and wealth, from ancient Sumer to London, Paris, and New York today, invariably attract peoples from the periphery who arrive—as immigrants, sojourners, or slaves—to do menial labor for the rich and mighty and share in their prosperity and culture, even as they retain much of their old cultures. It is the more or less homogeneous national state that is the recent, and perhaps ephemeral, novelty. So what is required to move our current debate forward is not more polemics about assimilation, bilingual education, and globalization, but hard thinking about how other empires throughout history have encouraged or discouraged multiculturalism, reaped its awards or suffered its drawbacks, and dealt well or poorly with the challenges posed when increasing numbers of "strangers" live in their midst. A recent Foreign Policy Research Institute History Academy asked a distinguished panel of scholars to engage in such hard thinking, and *Orbis* is pleased to share the results in these pages. For just as this century began with the United States in the throes of a tidal wave of immigration, concern over "hyphenated Americans," and debate over whether the "melting pot" still functioned, so too does it end.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese begins by deconstructing the ideology of multiculturalism, demonstrating why its promoters themselves are not genuinely multicultural at all, and then defining the multicultural realities which public policy needs to engage. Next, William H. McNeill, the dean of world historians, carries us back to the Fertile Crescent at the dawn of civilization and illuminates the patterns of cultural mixing, borrowing, coexistence, and conflict that have shaped the history of all civilizations. When does multicultural overload erode the strength of an empire, and what have ruling elites done in the past to avoid that? Three fascinating case studies provide three different models: David Gress describes the attitudes toward other cultures that characterized ancient Hellenic and Roman civilization; Stanley Wolpert examines the evolution of India, arguably the most multicultural civilization on earth; and June Teufel Dreyer analyzes China, a civilization defined by its dominant cultural paradigm and hence the least multicultural of all. Finally, the editor meditates on the necessity, but also the pitfalls, of taking a multicultural approach to history in the classroom.

Three more post–Cold War conundrums that remain unsolved as the century expires are Russia's quest to retain military prestige on the international scene, what the United

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States, NATO, or the United Nations can and should do about burgeoning ethnic conflicts, and the inability of American conservatives to reach a consensus over the U.S. role in a world without rivals. Richard Staar, a long-time observer of Russia, reveals a Russian document detailing plans to revive the military by spending billions of dollars on production and research and development. Veteran diplomat Chester Crocker applies his experience and insight to the problem of ethnic violence. And Michael Noonan discovers through a comprehensive survey just what the conservative, neoconservative, and libertarian wings of the American Right think about foreign and defense issues in advance of the 2000 campaign. Rounding out this last issue of the century are three review essays of more than usual interest. Harvey Sicherman tells why he thinks Warren Christopher's and Richard Holbrooke's tortured attempts to provide a logic behind the Clinton administration's foreign policy in fact reveal the haphazardness of its policy process. David Eisenhower brings his perspectives as an historian and an insider to Henry Kissinger's third volume of memoirs. And Paul Hollander asks why, now that communism resides on the ash heap of history, the American Left is still carrying a candle for Karl Marx.

Night Thoughts of an I.R. Professor

In this era of rapid and massive movement of people, ideas, and goods around the globe, it is stunning to think that the famous "Golden Spike" ceremony marking completion of America's first transcontinental railway occurred just 130 years ago, in 1869. William H. Seward, having retired after eight years as secretary of state and embarked on a round-the-world tour, imagined what a boon this engineering feat would be for the United States and the Pacific Rim, and predicted that Chicago would now become a great "Pacific port." During my research for *Let the Sea Make a Noise: A History of the North Pacific From Magellan to MacArthur*, I was struck by how differently the story of the transcontinental railway is told in books and videos today than when I was a child. Back then, it was a triumph of the American spirit and nation-building, and the roles played by an enlightened federal government, visionary businessmen, and doughty immigrant labor—Irish and Chinese especially—were extolled.

Today, the major theme of the story is always corruption, with the "Big Four" promoters of the Central Pacific—Collis P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins—portrayed as robber barons who manipulated Congress, stockjobbed on Wall Street, monopolized contracts and profits through a pyramid of dummy corporations, exploited their workers, and generally swindled the public. But so great were the magnitude of what they achieved, the risks they took, and the energy and determination they displayed that I was moved to suggest that theirs was a "creative corruption," and that perhaps such creative corruption is a characteristic trait of great nations. Other, less dynamic countries may exhibit creativity, but are insufficiently corrupt to get things done, or are

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comfortably corrupt, but not creative. Proudhon defined all property as theft and said that every fortune was built on a crime. Perhaps he was right. After all, it was he who correctly recognized that whereas capitalism was the exploitation of the weak by the strong, communism would be the exploitation of the strong by the weak: uncreative corruption.

I write these words overlooking the beach on Kiawah Island, just below Charleston, South Carolina. Though not as large or well known as Hilton Head, Kiawah and its sister Seabrook are among the lush resort communities built on the "sea islands" of the Carolinas and Georgia from the 1960s to 1980s. Entire islands of many square miles, once miserably poor and isolated, bereft of plumbing and electricity, and home only to Low Country wildlife and swamp-dwelling, "gullah"-speaking fishermen, have been terra-formed (to borrow a term from the spaceflight enthusiasts who dream of making Mars habitable) into perfectly landscaped, high-rent condominium communities with Jack Nicklaus golf courses and all the amenities. I asked myself, how was it done? Who raised the capital for developments of such gigantic proportions? Who issued the licenses and passed on the myriad of environmental protection statements? How many labor unions and citizens' groups had to be cut in or bought off to win their approbation—or silence? What local, state, and federal laws had to be circumvented or changed? How were the thousands of lucrative contracts drawn up, and how was it decided who would get them? Who bid on all the local monopolies such beach resorts create—everything from bicycle rentals to pizza delivery—and how were the winners selected? What is the corporate structure of all the "Inc.'s" involved, and what human beings lurk behind their facades? Now, I do not suggest that anything illegal was involved in the development of the sea island resorts. What is more, I have no doubt they contribute mightily to the well-being of the Low Country, from the wealthiest patrician to the poorest crabber. But I cannot help but wonder at the magnitude and multitude of deals that had to be swung to make it all possible.

Corruption. The great English historian Edward Gibbon called corruption the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty. Given human nature, the more freedom a society enjoys, the more mischief it will engender. James Madison and the Founding Fathers took for granted the corruption of government by business, and business by government, and tried to design a federal system of checks and balances so that corruption could be contained and could even work to preserve rather than efface American liberties. For how can any polity suppress corruption except by decreeing so many laws, and enforcing them with such martial rigor, that individual freedom is crushed? *Corruptiora res publica plurimae leges*, goes the old Roman saying: the more corrupt the republic, the more laws it will have. And that is why the motto of the University of Pennsylvania, *sine moribus leges vanae*, remains an eloquent civic sermon: without morals, laws are in vain.

Corruption has been a perennial in American domestic politics, of course, since the days of Alexander

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Hamilton and Aaron Burr, the "outs" always accusing the "ins" of abuses of power and then replicating their sins once in office. What is new in 1999 is the theme of corruption in world politics, a theme raised, not surprisingly, by moralistic Americans who insist on their calling to reform the whole human race. The campaign began in the fall of 1998 when Vice President Gore took the occasion of a meeting of Asia-Pacific states to lecture his Malaysian hosts on the need "to root out corruption and cronyism" and then announced plans for a major international conference on the issue. "Tragically," he said, "our best world-wide efforts to build stronger economies and stronger democracies are sometimes undercut by corruption—and no corruption is more evil and destructive than the corruption of government officials." To be sure, in the wake of the Asian financial collapse and the turmoil in Indonesia, no one denied the role played by self-serving officials and collusion of all sorts in the pricking of the Pacific Rim bubble. But the *Wall Street Journal* was skeptical of Gore's plan for a global crusade against corruption, given the elasticity of the concept (what is corruption, and does it vary according to culture?), the clouds hanging over the Clinton/Gore administration itself with regard to campaign finance and the impeachment proceedings, and the fact that the organizers of Gore's global conference were content to let (presumably corrupt) governments select their own representatives, which was akin to inviting Al Capone to name delegates to a conference on organized crime. Still, Gore could count on determined support from an anti-corruption lobby called Transparency International, which monitors and somehow quantifies levels of corruption in the nations of the world and promotes cooperative efforts to reduce it. "I think everybody recognizes that this is the issue of the moment," said the group's managing director. "Not that it's chic, but that it's actually important."[2]

So what exactly is corruption, and how damaging (or creative) can it be? The answer is, nobody knows. Even Transparency International does not claim to measure corruption, but rather the *perceptions* of corruption in various countries as expressed by foreign businesspeople. Which businesspeople, we do not learn, but one can assume that most of them hail from North America and Europe and perhaps Japan, which would automatically impose a Western standard of corruption on the sample. (Assuming the people polled tell the truth at all: would a company known to do lucrative business abroad confess openly to the "corruption" it had to accommodate?) But even Westerners are not in agreement on what the word means. To be "corrupt" technically means to be tarnished or rendered impure, changed from a healthy or normal to a putrid or aberrant condition. Thus, nothing is really corrupt unless it was once pristine. And since even American government or business was never in a state of grace one can no more denounce Lockheed as "corrupt" for bribing foreign offi-

[2] Quoted in Glenn R. Simpson, "Gore Plans International Talks for February on Strategies to Fight Government Corruption," *Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 7, 1998.

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cials than one can speak of corruption in China, where bribes have been an accepted cost of doing business (and compensating low-paid officials) for three thousand years. Is it corrupt for Japanese *keiretsu* to have special ties to the banks that finance them, or to "conspire" with government agencies regarding research and development, pricing, and the sharing of markets with other Japanese firms? Not only are such arrangements considered natural and indeed patriotic by Japanese, they are precisely the sorts of arrangements that helped any number of British and American companies to develop new technologies and dominate markets during their industrial revolutions.

Likewise, American notions of what is "corrupt" are both recent and constantly changing. Today, textbooks ritually condemn John D. Rockefeller as a ruthless monopolist, but he was not condemned at the time and he even considered his wealth as a sign of God's blessing on a son "in whom He is well pleased." Americans simply *decided*, during the Progressive Era, that certain practices should be labeled "corrupt" and laws passed against them. In the 1970s they decided that their corporations ought not to bribe foreign officials (thereby ensuring that American bidders would lose a number of lucrative contracts to less scrupulous competitors), and in the 1990s Americans decided, retroactively, that their tobacco companies had engaged in "corrupt" marketing practices. That must amuse the many governments around the globe that promote, tax, and in many cases own the tobacco (and liquor and firearms) industries in their countries.

How, then, to define corruption? As business practices that the governing elite considers "unfair"? As government practices that some businesses consider "unfair"? As government/business collusion that a portion of the public considers "unfair"? And how can one standard of corruption be established among nations all of whom are at different stages of development and inheritors of different moral and legal traditions? To judge from the Transparency International survey, the standard we all ought to choose is clear: it is that of Denmark. The Danes score a perfect 10 as the least "corrupt" people on earth. How wonderful of them. But what does that mean? Is it that Danes have invented "the most perfect union" in terms of their laws? Or is it that Danish law is no better than others' but that Danes are the most self-policed people on earth? And if the latter, why is that so? The answer would certainly seem to be cultural, because the second and third "least corrupt" nations—Finland and Sweden—and five of the top ten are Scandinavian as well. Northern Europe accounts for the rest of the top ten, too, if one includes Canada, New Zealand, and Singapore as offshoots off Britain. The United States ranks seventeenth: not bad, but hardly good enough to justify arrogating to itself the roles of preacher and judge.[3]

Especially in light of the events of 1999. No sooner did the vice president sound the tocsin against corruption than the Interna-

[3] Michael M. Phillips, "Cameroon Is Seen as Most Corrupt Nation, Denmark the Least in Study of Countries," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 23, 1998.

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tional Olympic Committee (IOC) scandal broke. It seems that the promoters of Salt Lake City, in order to win the 2002 Winter Olympics for their city, systematically bribed the members of the IOC, a body otherwise devoted to probity and fair competition. "How could it happen here, with our high moral standards?" asked the mayor. The answer is that the winner stood to rake in $2.8 billion for its local economy. By comparison a few million dollars in payoffs was chump change, and in any case, the investigation revealed, "everybody did it" and had done so for decades. Were even the Olympic Games therefore corrupt? Not necessarily, concluded the *New York Times*, because "the assistance was in a gray area between ethical and unethical." And in a sense, it was. Consider that many of the IOC delegates are from countries like Sudan, Togo, Mauritius, Mongolia, Algeria, and Swaziland—hardly the millionaire sportsmen one might imagine as being "incorruptible." Such delegates found irresistible Salt Lake City's offers of grants for educational and cultural projects for their countries, not to mention luxurious travel, entertainment, and career opportunities for themselves and their families. And why should they resist? Do not churches "persuade" Third World bishops to take certain theological positions by making contributions to their impoverished dioceses? Does not the State Department "persuade" Third World governments to vote this way or that in the United Nations by dispensing international development funds? Did China fail to get the 2000 Olympics (in another notorious decision of the IOC), not because of Tiananmen Square, but because it hadn't spread around enough cash? And did that humiliating loss of face contribute to China's sudden interest in the campaign coffers of American politicians? Let's face it, concluded journalist Christopher Caldwell, Salt Lake City and other such scandals are not shocking outbursts of corruption: they are "the American Way. It's what always happens when big money and big government cross paths. The 'gray area between ethical and unethical' is where our society has its being."[4]

So do all other societies, but as Glenn R. Simpson has wryly concluded, "Sooner or later, the issue of who is doing the corrupting is also going to come up. The big players on the 'supply side' of the corruption question . . . come from the countries with the money. Like the U.S."[5] And, one may add, the Europeans, who were "shocked, shocked" this year by the resignation en masse of the European Union's executive commission after revelations of institutionalized nepotism. The scandals "make us look like hypocrites," lamented one businessman concerned about corruption in Asia, and another was forced to backtrack on his anti-corruption efforts: "This isn't a stone-throwing contest." But Dean Ho, chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, drew the most useful conclusion. The West should refrain from setting itself up as an example and just encourage foreign businesses to set their own standards of permissible conduct and then adhere to them.

[4] Christopher Caldwell, "Pillars of Salt Lake: The Meaning of the Olympics Scandal," *The National Review*, Mar. 8, 1999, pp. 35–36.

[5] Simpson, "Gore Plans International Talks."

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That way, no one is pretending to be holier than thou, and everyone will know just where they stand when they seek to do business abroad.[6]

The questions that remain after Gore's abortive War on Corruption are just what corruption is, and how much damage it does. The former, as we have seen, is an invitation to contemplate one's navel, if not one's conscience. But the latter is pertinent. For all their unseemliness, Salt Lake City's bribes hurt no one except the promoters and residents of whatever city was runner-up for the Olympics. The *baksheesh* demanded by an impecunious minor official in Cameroon (ranked the world's "most corrupt country") in exchange for his placing an order with XYZ, Inc., instead of UVW, Ltd., likewise hurts no one except the losing firm's employees and stockholders. The systematic raiding of a nation's wealth, on the other hand, as happened in Indonesia and Zaire and is evidently occurring in Russia (tenth "most corrupt country"), can have catastrophic political, economic, and humanitarian consequences. That is the sort of corruption that needs to be addressed: the sort of governmental gangsterism that is anathema under the moral codes of all cultures. But how can the international community identify "gangster regimes"? Suharto's Indonesia, after all, was considered a model of booming development just a few years ago. And how can the international community unite to deter, punish, or even discourage such regimes? The United States, after all, was pleased to do business with Mobutu and Marcos for decades because it served U.S. political interests. The obvious place to turn, it would seem, would be the global financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, to which almost all nations already belong, and which are so often called upon to clear up the wreckage after a hyper-corrupt nation collapses. But when asked about corruption in light of the Asian crisis, all the World Bank's spokesperson could suggest was that "changes need to be made." That, as the business school professor says in the commercial, won't feed the bulldog.

Unless and until bioengineering does change human nature, as Fukuyama speculates may someday happen, corruption will not only be universal, it may also be necessary to get certain things, especially the big things, done in this world. For creative corruption is what seems to create wealth and power. Too bad that the love of wealth is, in turn, the root of all evil. Too bad that power, once achieved, tends to corrupt.

[6] Glenn R. Simpson and Marcus Brauchli, "Olympics, EU Commission Scandals Could Broaden Anticorruption Efforts," *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 2, 1999.

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Multiculturalism in History

Ideologies and Realities

by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

Increasingly, I wonder if any of us knows what multiculturalism means. Surely one of the sadder aspects of the recent history of academic culture wars must be the tendency for some to transform the term multiculturalism into an automatic epithet of opprobrium and for others to transform it into an automatic seal of approval. For critics, an endorsement of multiculturalism necessarily signals a nefarious political agenda; for supporters, it necessarily signals a certificate of good intentions. Those on both sides who allow themselves to be drawn into these self-serving characterizations are effectively capitulating to the premises of "reader response" criticism, or standpoint theory, according to which the meaning of a term such as multiculturalism depends exclusively upon the perspective of the individual. To be sure, the participants do not see it this way, but they are too deeply invested in defending their positions to appreciate a dispassionate view. In this respect, at least, the contending parties implicitly accede to the conviction that multiculturalism refers to an ideology rather than to a society, form of government, economy, coherent religious or intellectual system, or even a culture.

There is nothing surprising here. The nature and purpose of an "ism" are precisely ideological. But if an ideology is what we are dealing with, then we need to reflect briefly on the nature and purpose of ideology in general. Given the importance of ideological conflict in the modern world, it is hardly surprising that many people understand the term in the narrow sense influentially expounded by Karl Mannheim. In this sense, ideology figures as the battle cry or wartime propaganda of a specific group, party, or sect that seeks to shape an explanation of specific contested issues in such a way as to mobilize people to fight for or against them. Analyzing the process, Mannheim linked ideology to utopia and urged his readers to recognize ideologies as preeminently partisan manipulations of attitudes and beliefs. Notwithstanding the emergence of more sophisticated analyses of ideology, Mannheim's view continues to shape many people's attitudes, with the result that many still regard ideology as a deviation

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from, if not an outright opponent of, the truth. Ideology, in this perspective, becomes something that you—whoever you may be—"have," but I do not. This understanding reinforces the pejorative connotations of the term. Perhaps more important, it leaves the immutability and impartiality of the "truth" unscathed.

Alternate understandings of ideology nonetheless merit serious attention, if only to help us place prevailing understandings of the meaning of multiculturalism in perspective. The key figures here are Antonio Gramsci and Michel Bahktin. During the early twentieth century, both Gramsci, an Italian, and Bahktin, a Russian, focused their singular intellects upon the problem of ideology, which seemed to offer privileged access to an understanding of the role of culture in the life of peoples and nations. Notwithstanding Gramsci's primary focus upon political theory and Bahktin's primary focus upon literary criticism, their projects converged at many points.[1]

At the risk of gross simplification, permit me to suggest that both Gramsci and Bahktin understood ideology as a matter of participation rather than one of domination or manipulation. They further understood ideology in the broad sense as worldview rather than as partisan propaganda. Thus, ideology figures as a comprehensive system of beliefs to which different social groups adhere, often for different reasons. By the same token, ideology in their sense embodies the contributions of different groups. Thus, in a discussion of sixteenth-century France in *The World of Rabelais*, Bahktin emphasizes the role of the common people in setting limits to the unilateral authority of the king and in shaping the prevailing view of legitimate authority. No utopian populist, Bahktin never fudges the unequal distribution of power between king and people, but he insists that the king could only represent, justify, and exercise his power within limits set by the people. By encompassing the values of both monarch and people, the ideology that resulted from their interactions and, yes, struggles rose to the status of a comprehensive worldview that offered to all participants an acceptable picture of their relations.

Neither the critics nor the supporters of multiculturalism have shown much interest in Gramsci and Bahktin's capacious understanding of ideology. Indeed, both have so single-mindedly focused upon their specific political, cultural, and educational agenda as to permit the suspicion that they either are not familiar with it or do not understand it. And their failure in this regard has made negotiation, or even conversation, between them increasingly difficult. Another of the main casualties of this failure has been the ability of either side to acknowledge the murky relations between multiculturalism as ideology and the multicultural reality of our increasingly interdependent and intertwined global society.

[1] It is worth noting that the convergence is so great as to raise the question of the two men's possible influence upon one another, which is not implausible since Gramsci lived in the Soviet Union for several years.

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Independent of our attitudes toward multiculturalism, multicultural society is a fact—a fact that challenges both our presuppositions and our aspirations. But, above all, it is a fact that challenges our institutions and our culture. It requires little imagination to grasp that the increasing intermingling of peoples throughout the world places considerable pressure upon established governments, educational systems, and economies. The current crisis in the Balkans offers an especially dramatic enactment of the conflicts to which those pressures can lead, but its drama does not decisively exceed that of the conflicts that have torn apart Rwanda, Chechnya, and Afghanistan, to mention only a few.

Institutions determined to "manage diversity" will aggravate, not assuage, multicultural sensibilities.

We in the United States have been taught to see ourselves as a nation of immigrants and to take pride in the wealth of national cultures that our country has embraced. Western Europeans, however, have until recently tended to think of themselves as homogeneous peoples, although their more distant past featured a veritable olio of ethnic and national intermingling. Differences in historical experience and national memory notwithstanding, Europeans and Americans alike confront today a tide of immigration that is challenging their institutions and national cultures. The issues at stake range from the availability of jobs and the adequacy of funding for social services to the fundamental understanding of the balance between the rights of individuals and the cultural autonomy of groups. In a much-publicized case, the French government clashed with Islamic immigrants over the permissibility of veiling for schoolgirls from Islamic families. Yet more ominously, both France and Germany now confront unprecedented rates of unemployment, which predictably exacerbate tensions, and the fraying of their social welfare programs threatens citizens with what they regard as an unacceptable reduction in benefits. In other words, more than enough combustible material has accumulated to ignite a serious social and political conflagration.

Solutions, however makeshift, may be found, and the conflagration may never occur. But its non-occurrence would not alleviate this grave situation, much less guarantee a harmonious future. Skirmishes will almost certainly continue to proliferate, and loyalties to specific ethnic and national identities will almost certainly continue to harden. To complicate matters further, the European authorities in Brussels may be expected to press forward with their transnational agenda, which includes a heavy component of rules and regulations to enforce prescribed forms of personal relations and behavior—what some are wont to call "political correctness." Always and everywhere, bureaucrats seem inexorably drawn to Benthamite solutions, and the continuing expansion of the global economy seems guaranteed to expand their reach over smaller national and ethnic groups.

All current indications suggest that the continuing growth of transnational institutions that are determined to "manage diversity" will not assuage multicultural sensibilities but aggravate them. At the same time, the continuing expansion of the global economy will assuredly produce a steady increase in mobility and immigration. The developed nations underwrite a standard of living and offer

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an array of social services that the developing nations cannot hope to match. Unless the developed nations attempt to seal their borders—and it seems unlikely that the attempt would succeed—we may confidently predict a steady progression in the multicultural character of their populations and hence an intensification of multiculturalist passions.

Such are the contours of the fact of multicultural society. Increasingly, the world's inhabitants are living in close proximity to and interspersed among people of different ethnic and national backgrounds, and frequently at some distance from the land of their birth. For those of us who believe in original sin, it strains credulity to expect such a mixture naturally to produce a peaceable kingdom. But even those who believe that all of us are born innately good are likely to concede that sharp disparity in culture, resources, and expectations may well result in dissatisfaction and social conflict. And when differences in nationality, ethnicity, and race appear to coincide with differences in social and economic position, the potential for resentment reaches the boiling point.

As this scenario has unfolded, the West, which includes the majority of the developed nations, has become the privileged focus of resentment. The West's economic and technological success accounts for a good share of this resentment, but not all. Since the scientific revolution and the beginning of the expansion of capitalism, but especially since the eighteenth century, when both were harnessed to a specific conception of individualism, Western economic success and technological superiority have undergirded an accelerating campaign to hold other nations to "modern" Western standards. The reach and variety of this campaign defy even a minimal summary, but it included such varied features as instruction in domesticity for Native American women, introduction of Western forms of absolute property into West Africa, opposition to veiling and clitoridectomy among Islamic and African women, and widespread defense of a variety of "human rights."

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the West did tend to take pride in its difference from—and often its superiority to—other cultures. From the perspective of non-Westerners, the attitude found expression in missionaries' attempts to convert "heathens" to Christianity, in intellectuals' attempts to substitute science and rationality for traditional forms of thought, and in Western colonial administrators' and visitors' defense of the superiority of their political, social, and familial institutions. Many of the salient bones of contention emerge from a long-standing debate over Orientalism. Orientalism, according to its critics, most flamboyantly Edward Said, should be understood as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[2] Although Said popularized the arguments, he did not invent them. A number of Arab scholars had long resented the Western proclivity for what we

[2] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 3. On the larger debate, see Ulrike Freitag, "The Critique of Orientalism," in *Companion to Historiography*, ed. Michael Bentley (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 620–38.

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might call intellectual colonization, namely, the appropriation and reinterpretation of Arab intellectual traditions in the interest of judging and objectifying them.

Said's sweeping assimilation of all Western Orientalists, as scholars of Arabic culture were known, into a single category reflected the multiculturalist sensibility that unilaterally condemned the West for casting members of all other cultures as "the other." Among other things, he purposed to demonstrate Westerners' unwillingness to respect any culture that differed from their own and any people who did not adopt their culture. The core of the charge, however, lay in something other than a mere critique of cultural chauvinism. As Said perfectly understands, that is a crime in which countless peoples have participated. But Said had no interest in leveling the playing field by reminding Western readers of such instances of Arab disdain for Western "barbarism" as flourished at the time of the Crusades. Rather, he sought to isolate the West as uniquely guilty and to challenge Westerners to atone for their sin by confession, penance, and fitting reparation.

Unlike most American academic multiculturalists, Said, whatever his failings, is a serious political man and a knowledgeable player on the world stage. It is, accordingly, reasonable to surmise that his attack on Orientalism was primarily intended as an intervention in the persisting campaign for a Palestinian state. In this case, fitting atonement might well include Western diplomatic support for the establishment of such a state. If a flurry of collective guilt over Orientalist prejudices resulted in multiculturalist gains within the American academy, so much the better, but his true purpose lay elsewhere. Most academic multiculturalists, however, lack Said's political sophistication and, in particular, his understanding of or dedication to the international stakes. For them, the stakes lie closer to hand, notably in control over the curriculum and the hiring and firing of professors.

Here again, the contrast with Said may help to clarify the issues. I do not know Edward Said personally, which means that I may entirely misjudge him. With some temerity, let me nonetheless suggest that Said, perhaps because of the substance of his political and diplomatic concerns, seems to have resisted casting himself as the representative of the Palestinians in the American academy. Thus, while he is more than willing to use his academic position to advance his political cause, he does not seem to be using his political cause to advance his academic position. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of many of his colleagues.

One of the salient and arguably more disturbing aspects of multiculturalism has been the tendency of many academic multiculturalists to view their own advancement as a proxy for the advancement of their people. Thus, Joan Scott has argued that contemporary academic politics are a proxy for the political struggles of the past. She thereby implies that the academic success of a woman—or a member of some other "oppressed" group—constitutes an ex post facto gain for all women, today and in the past. This attitude exposes the intimate link between multiculturalism as an ideology and the identity politics that pervade so many of our schools and colleges. The question nonetheless remains whether identity politics simply figures as a weapon of multiculturalists,

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or whether multiculturalism is being debased into a weapon of identity politics. Merely to raise this question is to return us to the attempt to understand the relations between multiculturalism as ideology and multicultural society as fact. And we might take a preliminary step towards unraveling these relations by considering multiculturalists' attitude toward the West.

The critique of Orientalism focuses upon the injury that Westerners inflict upon others by assigning them the role of "the other." In this view, Westerners culturally exploit other peoples in order to establish their own superiority. Westerners are the informed observers, and their complacent gaze reduces other peoples to the observed—to mere curiosities, if you will. In this perspective, the first demand of those who are observed is to receive equal respect as thinking, observing subjects. This quest for respect figured prominently in the indigenous Arab critique of Orientalism, but the history of recent decades suggests that many Islamic peoples also seek something more. For Islamic societies, more than most, are inclined to oppose everything which they—with considerable justification—believe the West represents. The Iranians, to take the most dramatic example, do not, in the normal sense, seek to be accepted by the West on equal terms. To the contrary, they consciously reject Western values, which they—again not incorrectly—credit with the destruction of religious piety, organic bonds among individuals, and respect for tradition. As Bernard Lewis has cogently argued, Islamic fundamentalists believe that they represent the last bulwark against Western materialism, decadence, and nihilism, and they envisage their relations with the West as a holy war that must end in the destruction of one side or the other. The measure of their conviction may be appreciated in the number of them who unflinchingly die for the cause.

Few, if any, other peoples have ever declared a holy war on the West, although prudence and experience suggest that it would be rash to take the Chinese lightly. But I leave that consideration for the experts. Here, my point is simply that most developing nations are more than willing to benefit from at least some of the features of Western modernization, mainly economic development, but also such Western cultural tendencies as rock music, blue jeans, and television. And increasing numbers of non-Westerners are drawn to Europe, Canada, and the United States in quest of political freedom, education, employment, a higher standard of living, and improved prospects for their families. These people are less likely to see the West as evil incarnate than to see it as the custodian of riches they covet. In this respect, their goal is less to destroy it than to stake a claim to its resources. Evidence suggests that many immigrants value highly both the opportunities available and the prevailing political freedom.

Recent events confirm that rabid anti-Western sentiment may crop up in Serbia or Somalia or the Sudan or any other country that gets a first-hand taste of Western military power, but one may plausibly argue that after the Islamic fundamentalists the most pervasive hostility to the West does not lie beyond its borders but within them. A full exploration of the reasons for this hostility would exceed the time available here, but a few main points command attention. In part, the multiculturalists' hostility to the West reflects a revolt

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against rationalism and science and what some sneeringly call logocentrism. In part, their hostility reflects a fixation upon personal experience and subjective perception, which you will recognize as the flip side of their anti-rationalism. Neither sensibility is new to the West, which has frequently spawned its own harshest critics. Both nonetheless embody new elements, most significantly a systematic hostility to legitimate authority, expressed as a multi-front war against reason, nature, and God.

On the face of it, the link between multiculturalism and this radical personalism and nominalism seems less than obvious. Most of us would find the core rationale for multiculturalism in loyalty to, and identification with, a specific ethnic or national group with deep cultural traditions. Since it is in the nature of such groups and traditions to value the authority of the collectivity and the past over the claims of the individual, it is difficult to understand how membership in, or identification with, the group could be taken to justify hostility to authority. But that logic ignores the extent to which the multiculturalists embody the very *Western* traditions they claim to deplore. Multiculturalism as ideology owes more to Western individualism than it does to non-Western traditionalism, and the evocation of specific cultures has more to do with self-representation than with immersion in a traditional culture.

Multiculturalists embody the very *Western* traditions they claim to deplore.

Critics have noted that American academic multiculturalists show little interest in learning the languages of other cultures, much less in respecting their hierarchical principles and traditions. What has received less attention is the extent to which multiculturalism embodies an assault upon history itself. Multiculturalists do not much like the encumbrance of unpleasant facts, especially about the culture with which they identify. Rarely, for example, do they dwell upon the prevalence of slavery throughout the non-Western world, especially among Islamic and African peoples. In their orthodoxy, slavery was a uniquely Western crime perpetrated upon non-Western peoples. And the attempt to convince them that until the late eighteenth century few people of any culture viewed slavery as a moral evil invariably shipwrecks upon the shoals of their unyielding presentism. If we may trust the evidence of recent experience, multiculturalists cannot conceive of a culture that was not grounded in, and did not celebrate the rights of, the imperial individual.

Some might expect that these individualistic convictions would naturally lead to a renewed celebration of the Western tradition, but they would be deceived. Indeed, multiculturalists regularly assail Western individualism, which they charge with the oppression and marginalization of all of those whom elite white men have cast as "the other." African Americans, Native Americans, and women regularly top the list of those whom white male Western individualism has injured, but as members of other groups claim their place at the table of the colonized and the oppressed, the list expands. The main criterion for inclusion appears to be a subjective sense of injury, and the preferred means of redress appears to lie in establishing one's personal right to protection, preference, or reparation. And thus do we return, once again, to the Western

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conception of the individual. At times, it is difficult not to see the entire struggle as the perennial revolt of the sons against the father or, in this instance, the children against the parents.

The criteria for inclusion within the embrace of multiculturalism provide grounds for confusion. Why women? Why those who proclaim assorted varieties of sexual preference? If one hews to a narrow understanding of culture as the system of beliefs and practices that unites a people of a specific ethnicity or nationality, then the inclusion of people of a specific sex or sexual preference seems difficult to justify. If, however, one adopts a broad understanding of culture as the beliefs and practices shared by people of similar tastes and "lifestyles," the inclusion makes more sense. But then we lose the meaning of culture as the articulation of the beliefs and practices of an historically grounded, self-reproducing community or people. Culture in this sense is something you are born into, not something you choose. What makes less sense is the pretense that relations among the embodiments of different cultures should be harmonious. History provides little reassurance on this score. Some of you may recall that ethnic and national difference apparently supplied the original rationale for slavery. This was the spirit in which Aristotle pronounced some men "naturally" fit to be slaves, since those whom he deemed natural slaves were those whom the Greeks called barbarians, by which they meant non-Greek.

Sad as it may seem, history also provides scant reason to assume that cultural pluralism and democracy are natural bedfellows. To the contrary, the coexistence of different cultures within a single territory or society has generally resulted in the triumph of an administrative or authoritarian government or in the enslavement of the members of one culture by those of another. The United States ranks as the primary example of a democratic multicultural society, and it has owed its success to distinctly Western values and institutions, including individualism and democracy. It would be a cruel irony if zeal to push those values and institutions to their radical extreme were to engender a quasi totalitarianism and the progressive undermining of respect for the individual.

Nowhere is it decreed that a multicultural society cannot sustain democratic institutions and respect for the individual. But history and common sense alike confirm that the attempt to level all distinctions of talent, accomplishment, and inheritance is more than likely to require draconian methods and end in tyranny. Consider the history of socialism in the twentieth century. By the same token, it is nowhere guaranteed that unyielding defense of the values and institutions of the past against the onslaught of those who are viewed as the modern barbarians will safeguard the core of the Western tradition. Consider the history of Rome from the third to the fifth centuries.

Rome, you will recall, was undermined from within as much as toppled from without. Edward Gibbon, the greatest historian to write in English, blamed Rome's fall upon Christians and barbarians, although their success owed much to the Roman elite's inability or disinclination to renew and reinvigorate its inherited culture. We would do well to recognize Rome's fate as a cautionary tale for our times, not because history inevitably repeats itself, for it usually

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does not, but because history leaves no doubt that the unthinkable can—and sometimes does—happen.

The multicultural reality of our world is here to stay and will likely intensify. The more interesting question concerns our adaptation to it. Neither multiculturalism nor anti-multiculturalism is serving us well. What we need is a capacious worldview that invites respect for the cultures of others and loyalty to one's own. Above all, any compelling understanding of the multicultural present requires attention to the past, because all cultures are essentially historical.

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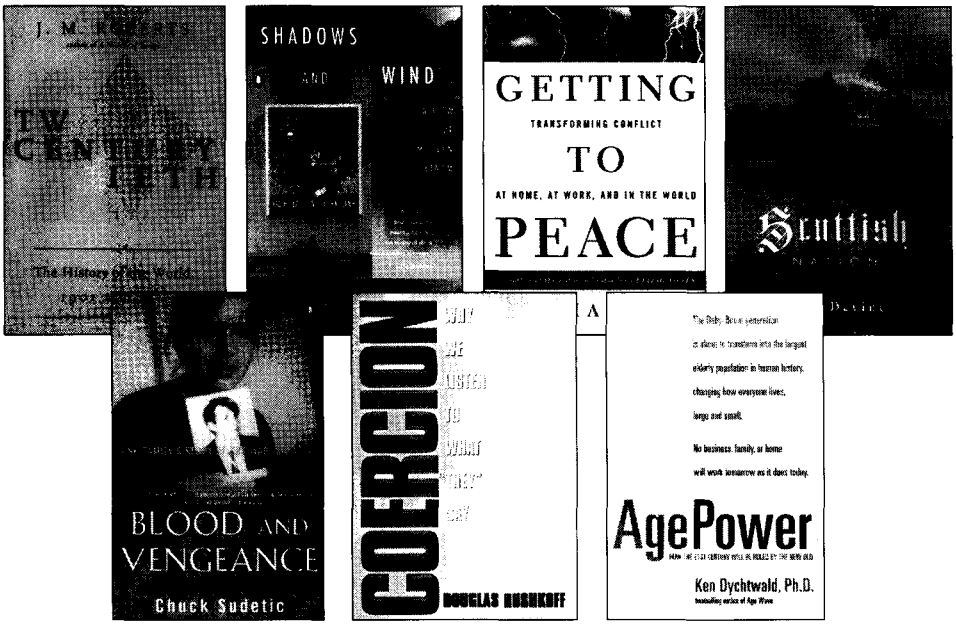

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Multiculturalism in History

An Imperative of Civilization

by William H. McNeill

Multiculturalism and world history! When I was asked to talk about this, I was intrigued, but also unsure just what was expected. Multiculturalism as an ideology, after all, is the province of a small fringe group of people who seem to say that every culture is just as good as every other and deserves just as much space as anyone else's. To me, that does not seem to be a very serious position and is something not worth really worrying about. Multiculturalism as a human actuality, by contrast, has existed across the millennia in human affairs, ever since cities first arose. And that does seem to me worth thinking about, discussing, and putting into a general framework of world history. So it was that I succumbed to the invitation.

The first thing to say is that multiculturalism is an obvious reality, because different groups of people created discrete cultures. It is a reality that presumably dates back to the initial dispersal of humankind around the world, as groups became more isolated from one another across longer distances, developed unique technologies, and adapted to differing environments. The human race, in short, comprises a myriad of cultures.

But multiculturalism in the more exact (and contemporary) sense of people with different cultures living permanently cheek by jowl is an affair of cities. It arose whenever long-distance trade and diasporas living from trade became significant, and it required mutual adaptation so that all parties might gain the advantages of exchanging raw materials and manufactures—and ideas—from different parts of the world. So far as current scholarship can determine, this trade really began with ancient Sumer in the fourth millennium B.C., when the first cities arose at the intersection of a maritime network stretching across the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean and a land caravan network made possible by the domestication of donkeys. Precisely when the latter was achieved and long-range caravans began to travel cross-country is uncertain, but evidently human beings began sailing the seas very early—as early as 40,000 B.C., when Australia was first settled. Navigation in the Indian Ocean is thus extremely ancient, but what made the land of Sumer so critical was that

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it was where long-range trade routes over land and sea first came together. They linked the mountainous hinterland up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers with the Persian Gulf, and in turn with the manifold coastlands of the southern seas and oceans, where monsoon winds made sailing easy.

Sumerian cities were settlements typically divided between landholders—the core settlement, of which the temple households were the largest and the most significant part—and what might be called a *faubourg*, the French medieval term for people living outside the city walls, including boatmen, caravan personnel, and long-distance sailors. Such sojourners formed a permanent if ever-changing population of peripatetic strangers, outsiders, and foreigners—people of different cultures, yet close at hand. Archaeologists have established the bifurcation of the earliest settlements, whose layout attests to this first multicultural reality.

There was probably another fissure, about which scholars are less sure, that is suggested by Sumerian texts referring to agricultural laborers as "black-headed people" and thus perhaps of different ethnicity from their Sumerian managers and the masters of the written language. After some thousand years, however, that single, dominant Sumerian group was overtaken by speakers of a Semitic language, Akkadian. They migrated from the fringes of the Mesopotamian world, and Sargon of Akkad, who dated from about 2250 B.C., was the first Semitic-speaking conqueror. But Akkadians were very eager apprentices to Sumerian skills and knowledge, especially in matters of religion, where they inherited the responsibility for managing relations with the gods. So the Akkadians readily practiced bilingualism if only because the gods were used to being addressed in Sumerian. The result was a civilization based on two sacred languages, with dictionaries translating from one to the other. Without these dictionaries, scholars might never have succeeded in deciphering Sumerian, which has no known linguistic relatives.

Now, the dominance of these ruling Sumerian and Semitic peoples was due to their monopolization not only of property, wealth, and power, but also of knowledge, especially of how to appease the gods. And it is possible that their modes of communicating with the gods were the motor of their entire social development. The drive to make temples more magnificent and liturgies more elaborate in order to earn divine good will (and thus, good harvests and safety) may have inspired a constant search for precious goods and curiosities brought from afar by caravans and ships. Indeed, it is probable that other Eurasian and Mesoamerican civilizations arose at similar exchange nodes, and it is possibly also true that the struggle to win favor with supernatural forces was central to the creation of cosmopolitan markets in each of these civilizations as well.

At any rate, the earliest civilizations all seem to have had priestly leadership at first, superseded or supplemented over time by a warrior class. Now, each civilization exhibits an endless variation of detail, and no single pattern, no fixed dynamic, characterizes them all. But always and everywhere, civilizations involved polyethnic mingling and attracted people who came from a distance to live, temporarily or permanently, in relatively close proximity.

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Today this phenomenon is only intensified by the enormous capacity of modern transport and communication.

To be sure, like almost everything else in human affairs, this sort of "cheek-by-jowl" multiculturalism, causing people to live next to, or very close to, people whose beliefs, behavior, customs, and outward appearance are quite different, has positive and negative effects. One clear advantage is the access to new goods, skills, knowledge, and arts of which one would otherwise be ignorant. That is why exchange systems exist and persist in the first place and were present even *before* cities, amongst the earliest human hunters and gatherers. Clear proof of that derives from the chemical analysis of obsidian blades. Obsidian holds a very sharp edge, was the best cutting instrument available prior to metal, and thus was very precious to Stone Age communities. By chemical analysis, you can discover just where a given obsidian blade originated because it will contain trace elements from a volcano somewhere in the neighborhood. We know, therefore, that obsidian was carried by prehistoric traders many hundreds of miles from one group of hunters and gatherers to others. But the establishment of genuine multicultural communities required a much higher and more regular volume of exchange than the odd sliver of obsidian traded at occasional festivals as neighbors met their neighbors and so on, which is why urbanization, official cults, and the creation of market demands beyond the needs of sheer survival are intrinsic to what we call civilization.

The obvious downside of living with strangers with a different culture from one's own is that they can be, or can be perceived as, a danger or even as enemies. Trading has always been one way of exchanging, but raiding is another, and each can easily give way to the other depending on the relative strength of the parties. Still, booty amounts to a sort of accidental assemblage of goods. It may or may not contain what the raiders desired or be truly useful in the form it is taken. Even pirates and raiders usually required the services of intermediaries who would accept what they had in exchange for what they really wanted. Thus, raid and trade are first cousins, and one cannot exist without the other.

The Dangers and Boons of Cultural Mix

While strangers are always a potential threat to life and property, a multicultural setting can give rise to a still more profound threat to the host society. And that is because strangers who are to some degree ignorant of local customs and mores, and more or less indifferent to one's sacred beliefs and rituals, constitute by the very fact of their nonparticipation a tacit or active challenge to the *validity* of local authority and tradition. What can the dominant group in a multicultural setting do about that?

So long as one group remains clearly dominant and so long as the gap between the hosts and the minority is not too wide, newcomers can normally be compelled to conform, at least outwardly, to the expectation of their hosts. They may even learn from their hosts and seek to be assimilated, assuming

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the dominant group will allow them to do so. Such tolerant "melting pot" behavior was a strong pattern that helped to maintain urban societies throughout the past, and not just the distant past, but the medieval and early modern eras as well. Indeed, given the demographic decay that usually characterized urbanized societies, due to infectious diseases above all, cities normally *had* to be sustained demographically by a constant in-migration from the countryside. Cities had to attract "strangers" or they would wither and die over time. Now, when the rural migrants come from relatively near at hand, the cultural and linguistic differences between them and the city folk are likely to be relatively minor. Assimilation to urban life under such circumstances is normal and unquestioned across a generation or two. Modern frictions of over-multiculturalism, by contrast, result from the fact that our urban cultures have come to embrace whole nations as their "rural hinterlands" thanks to the effect of modern transport and communications. Moreover, the recent collapse of birth rates all across the most highly developed parts of the world requires—or invites—migration from ever longer distances and across cultural barriers. That creates far larger gaps between the newcomers and the host population, making assimilation more difficult and inviting or tempting the newcomers to cling to the culture of their homeland. And the fact that communication with one's original homeland is much easier than ever before means that the possibility of maintaining ethnic particularism is much enhanced.

How does a dominant group negotiate a modus vivendi with large, autonomous minorities in its midst?

How then does a dominant group negotiate a modus vivendi with large, autonomous, well-connected, and self-confident minorities in its midst? This is the problem facing the United States, Western Europe, and Russia today, where birth rates have fallen below replacement levels. It is a very new phenomenon—post-1945 for the most part—and one of fundamental importance for the cultural, political, and social landscape of our time. But I hasten to say it is not unique. Other urban groups have, in times past, found it impossible to maintain themselves. Very possibly the decay of Sumerian civilization and the rise of the Akkadians was due to similar demographic processes. It is certain that the nineteenth-century decay of German townsmen across Eastern Europe, retreating before enhanced migration from the Slavic countryside and failing to assimilate the newcomers to the German way of life, formed the background to the breakup of the Hapsburg monarchy, with immense consequences for the history of Europe.

When people live close together, there is bound to be interaction between cultures. No one can live in complete isolation. The normal pattern, as was apparently true in ancient Sumer and seems to have been the case in every other urbanized setting, is ghettoization. The strangers are kept at arm's length, perhaps not with a wall around them like the Jews of medieval Venice (whence we derive the word *ghetto*), but in separate neighborhoods nonetheless. One need only think of medieval England, where the Lombards and the Baltic merchants of the Hanseatic League lived in separate enclaves. They enjoyed

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the king's protection and a good deal of local autonomy, running their own affairs according to their own laws, independent of the people around them. They had only to pay the crown a fee, or ransom if you like, for protection. Similar arrangements existed in ancient and medieval China. There was a Muslim quarter in Canton, subsumed within the Chinese city. The Muslims were foreigners, to be sure, but thanks to the tribute they paid in return for the protection of the Chinese government, they were free to run their own affairs.

This was the standard pattern, and the ethnic neighborhoods in most American cities are a sort of residue of that ancient practice. Nor is such separatism a function only of the dominant group's prejudice or fear. Strangers want to live together, too. For example, the fourteenth-century Muslim traveler Ibn Batuta makes it very clear that after his arrival in China he was appalled by the Chinese: so indifferent to the revelation of Mohammed, which meant so much to him, yet nevertheless so numerous, skilled, and civilized as to be overwhelming. So he was relieved to meet fellow Muslims, including someone who had come from his own native Morocco—a neighbor encountered halfway around the world.

Whether or not a ghetto had a formal legal structure and "charter," it was always a vehicle for mutual accommodation. By and large, it seems to me that vigorous and successful cultures can afford to be interested in novelties from afar, welcome strangers, and assimilate them more or less into an evolving common culture. But cultures change in the process, as the "stranger" gradually comes to be accepted as one of "us," not one of "them." That is certainly the way I would describe the history of the United States, given its conspicuous success in this respect.

In contrast, when local culture loses a sense of its inner security, self-confidence, and cohesion, strangers start to appear more threatening and efforts to defend sacred truths and traditions become far more compelling. A telling example of that is what has occurred in French Canada. When I was a youngster in Canada, the Québecois were, of course, different from English Canadians. Everybody knew that. A sort of old-regime France survived on Canadian soil until the Second World War. What is more, the French had a much higher birth rate than other Canadians, as if in defense of their besieged way of life. But the pattern was disrupted during World War II, thanks to the boom in employment in Montreal and other cities, swiftly followed by a catastrophic drop in the birth rate. Young French Canadian women simply decided that they would never be enslaved to the cradle as their mothers, with eight or ten children, had been, with the result that the birth rate of French Canadians today is lower than that of English Canadians. Preservation of French culture and language was suddenly not as secure as before and so had to be buttressed by political action to compel signs in French and other sorts of linguistic policing, not only in Québec, but throughout Canada. And while a few liberal French Canadians think that is not the way to go, the Parti Québecois and most French Canadian intellectuals and politicians endorse the new ethnic politics.

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Now, in general, whenever alien cultures collide, a deep ambivalence prevails. The age-old feature central to the historical process is that when people meet strangers, their obvious differences challenge local inherited ways. How to react? One may say, "He knows some things that I do not, he can do things that I cannot. Let me imitate him, improve and transform what he does and so acquire the skill, knowledge, and ability which he has and which I want." And that, of course, means changing established ways of behaving. Alternatively, one can say, "The stranger is corrupt and likely to seduce us from our ancestral ways. We must therefore strengthen ourselves against this intruder, underscore the differences between us and him and, if possible, impose *our* ways on him." But that also involves changing older behaviors.

Both responses, the positive and the negative, the acceptance and the rejection, involve an adjustment. And such adjustment, I am convinced, is the principal force behind historical change and cultural innovation across the centuries, because, other things being equal, the dominant, everyday tendency of human action is to do things the way one's parents did, the way one's ancestors did, the way they have always been done and obviously ought to be done. What provokes innovation is some perceived discrepancy between expectation and experience. Now, it is possible and certainly true that invention can arise from contradictions within existing traditions of learning and science. For the last three or four hundred years, in the West at least, the systematic search for new ideas and new technologies has become more and more prevalent.[1] But in ancient times, when sacred learning was the norm, what effectually challenged prevailing ideas and practices was seldom internal contradictions, but an encounter with outsiders who had different skills and ideas, some of which seemed better than anything known before and some of which threatened what the insiders held most dear. And because civilizations, by definition, are those places where strangers live side by side, even if ghetto walls separate them at night, civilizations are ipso facto volatile loci of change and exchange of new skills, tools, and knowledge, thereby augmenting their power over both nature and neighboring peoples.

There are also interesting biological dimensions to the phenomenon of urban multiculturalism.[2] Since cities attracting people from far away are veritable rookeries of infectious diseases, they create a civilized population that in time develops a high level of resistance and immunity. Such acquired immunities, in turn, become a mighty, if unconsciously wielded, weapon for the destruction of isolated peoples who have never been exposed to infections originating abroad. And this is a second reason why civilizations expand. They break down the demographic structures of previously isolated peoples with whom they

[1] However, it is easy to exaggerate how old that is. The idea of throwing away a perfectly good machine because you had a better one is really only about 150 years old now and was very radical when it was first introduced in the chemical, steel, and ferrous metallurgical industries.

[2] See William H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (New York: Doubleday, 1977).

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come into contact. Both kinds of power, biological toughness and infectiousness, and the power of ever-altering technologies and ideas, tend to move outwards from the center and travel swiftly across very long distances.

Nevertheless, what held civilizations together despite the multiculturalism built into their body politic was widespread acceptance of a common code of thought and behavior amongst a privileged ruling elite or elites. The exact agreed-upon code or codes varied in each case, but no civilization lacked a dominant code and none survived the loss of that code. In sum, a civilization is a population whose rulers pay lip service to a corpus of agreed-upon truths and rules, and conform in their actual behavior to such truths and rules at least to a certain degree. That is what allows for efficient cooperation across large areas and among literally millions of people. And that is what makes civilization so powerful: maintenance of a predictable minimum level of agreement as to what ought to occur, what ought to be done, and how people ought to behave, even when they are strangers to one another.

Now, underneath the ruling elite, lower classes and local ethnic groups subordinated to them always had, I think, multiple and divergent cultures. But they shared some things with the ruling elite; they had to, if only to survive as subordinates in the presence of a representative of the elites. And lest that seem an exaggeration, recall that until the "day before yesterday"—certainly until the early part of the nineteenth century—in every civilization in history, *urban* populations were a very tiny minority. The peasant majority lived in villages and were *in*, but not *of*, urban high culture. They knew something about it but they certainly did not share it. They had little in the way of formal education, and perhaps none at all. They had a tradition that was local and was passed on from parent to child across generations, time out of mind, and thus they accommodated social superiors as best they could and constituted the bedrock of all society. To repeat, cities rested on that bedrock because they had to be maintained by migration from the countryside. Thus, from the time of neolithic development of agriculture, the real living cell of society was the village. Villages are what kept human society going, biologically and culturally.

As for the urban, "civilized" elites, they soon became aware that there were others like them at far distances. Within Eurasia, the landmark that I emphasized in *The Rise of the West* was the expedition that the Chinese emperor Wu Ti sent to Ferghana in 101 B.C. in search of horses that could carry armored men on their backs and so drive away the steppe nomads from the borders of China. Rumors of such horses had reached China from the west and from that time onward contact was never broken off for long. Caravans traversed the full breadth of Asia and as time went on their numbers and scale increased. Not long afterward, regular contacts by sea were also established—surely by the second century A.D., when self-styled ambassadors from the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (died 180 A.D.) arrived at the Chinese court.

These contacts brought awareness of distant accomplishments to the attention of the respective elites, calling into existence what may be called a world system of exchange. It was, if you will pardon the phrase, a multicivili-

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zational interactive galaxy of cultures, in which the urban nodes were critical, but which was characterized by cultural slopes from the urban nodes downward toward the provinces in each case. The world system was a sort of moving landscape, because in every particular part of the Eurasian world new developments, inventions, skills, sources of wealth, and population spikes and declines were occurring more or less rapidly, and so defining cultural heights, depths, and slopes in a fluid topography. Similar things happened in the Americas. The Aztec and Inca civilizations did have contacts with one another, though we know relatively little about them, and the cultural slopes from those two principal centers of high skill extended north into what is now the United States and deep into South America. Likewise in Australia amongst the hunters and gatherers of that continent, I suspect cultural flows existed, but differences there were far less than in the Eurasian or American worlds, and patterns of diffusion and change are impossible to reconstruct.

After 1500, of course, the Eurasian and African system engulfed all the others, and our own one world is the heir and frame for multicultural interaction today. Accordingly, ours is multiculturalism with a vengeance, because literally thousands of distinct human cultures, each precious to some group and alien to others, and a multiplicity of metropolitan centers and cultural slopes, now interact in an ever-shifting landscape of cultures and subcultures that are either gaining or losing attractiveness among our species as a whole.

The Essential Fragility of Civilization

Now, in coping with this elemental fact of human life, it seems obvious that one must teach coming generations, heirs as they will be to quite different cultural traditions, that multiculturalism is a fact, a reality very ancient among humankind and sure to persist indefinitely into the future, for the simple reason that existing groups are attached to their differences and treasure the distinctive cultural markers that separate "us" from "them."

Consider my own experience as one who was born in Canada and spent the first ten years of life there. I was brought up very conscious of Canadians' image of themselves as the "true north, strong and free," poor but virtuous, and by virtue of our poverty and hardihood superior to the soft, corrupt republic to the south. Canadians still feel that way, though they may not say so quite so bluntly as I have done. Now, Canada—English Canada, anyway—is as like the United States as any two countries are ever likely to be. But each people treasures its differences. Imagine the divergences, then, among peoples with far greater cultural gaps.

So multiculturalism is here to stay, contrary to the commonplace American assumption that the "American way" is normative for all other peoples on earth, either by dint of preference or inevitable historical forces. The American tradition of assimilating immigrants is an expression of that assumption in microcosm and dates back to the eighteenth-century universalist notion that our values and institutions are an example that the world as a whole will eventually follow.

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That is just not so. One need only to visit Canada and talk to a few Canadians privately to be disabused of such universalism. And that lesson is the first thing we ought to try to teach our youth.

The second is that, in spite of human determination to cling to differences, people and nations somehow must get along with each other peaceably, whether in the neighborhoods of our cities or on the planet we share. A failure to escape crippling social conflict and disruption, and the almost unimaginable costs of organized conflict in a closely interdependent world, scarcely bears thinking about.

The fragility of contemporary civilized society is something seldom talked or thought about, but the truth is that the essentials of everyday life today almost always arrive from afar. We depend on the delivery of fruits and vegetables from California, Florida, or overseas. But if gasoline should cease to flow faithfully through the pipelines and pumps, most inhabitants of the United States would be without food or fuel in six months or less. How utterly dependent we are on this flow-through economy, which is so vulnerable to serious disruption! The sort of thing that happened to the Russians in 1917, when 80 percent of the people were still self-sufficient peasants, would be infinitely more catastrophic today. The world is enormously vulnerable, like a spinning top poised on a single point.

The "American way" is *not* normative for all other peoples on earth.

So we have to get along peacefully. We cannot afford any massive resort to violence for any length of time, either domestically or internationally. And that requires mutual accommodation and respect. Some sort of social space for cultural differences becomes essential for practical citizenship, for the survival and maintenance of everyday life.

But remember the bedrock of all civilization: a predictability of behavior derived from a consensus about overriding rules. In one sense, we already possess that essential cultural capital, enshrined in sacred codes of conduct such as the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would be done by." Close parallels to it exist in other great religions of the world. Almost the identical words can be found in Confucius's *Analects*, for instance, and I do not think this is entirely an accident, for the survival advantage of such a rule is obvious. Wherever strangers abound and contacts with them are inescapable, giving them the benefit of the doubt, doing to them as you would be done by, has very sound, practical results. You are less likely to have your throat cut or be stabbed in the back. A little bit of trust, a little bit of generosity, goes a long way and so the survival value of such moral injunctions is very real.

Yet, at the same time, any realistic vision of the human condition must admit that there is a need for a certain readiness to defend local cultural heritages. Only so can a cultural tradition persist, can cooperation within the group that shares a culture be sustained and passed from generation to generation.

As I conceive of these things, the transmission of culture is a kind of loose survival of the fittest. Which rules of life work optimally, which rules attract adherents most powerfully? Those are the ones most likely to prevail

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and assimilate outsiders. And this, unless I quite misunderstand the facts, is how all the principal religions of the world, and indeed secular cultures, arose and flourished: by converting individuals and groups, first at a locus of origin and then along paths we can at least partially reconstruct. One can follow the loci of principal creativity across the centuries and generations and see how one part of the world after another assumed the role of metropolitan center.[3]

Mine may be a narrow-minded and obtuse vision of reality. But it seems to me that the ultimate arbiters of the rise and fall of cultures, their propagation, spread, and transformation, are individual and group choices. Every human being faces the questions, Who am I? With whom do I belong? How do I define myself? How ought I to behave amongst those like myself and others who are not "us," but outsiders? These are the perpetual and universal moral questions that have always haunted human groups and associations at every scale, from the family on up to nations and civilizations, and arise in every kind of human encounter.

The answers chosen, and the behavior consequent to them, define the rise and disintegration of all social groups, local, national, and transnational, as well as the fate of humankind as a whole, because contemporary weapons can destroy us all. So we clearly need a more peaceable world, we need a more peaceable way of behaving toward culturally different individuals and groups, and we need effective ways of familiarizing the young with the ongoing cultural traditions of the world.

And here, of course, schooling certainly can help. Schooling is very powerful. Teachers have always helped to shape the minds of the persons put in their charge, and teachers today, it seems to me, must first of all accept for themselves and their pupils a global perspective on that human past. This is the only way they can introduce the young to the multicultural world that they actually inhabit, whether they want to or not, and also introduce them to the United States' own local version of high culture, which derives, of course, mainly from Latin Christendom and, in some specific and important political respects, from England and France of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Now, it is a tall order for any teacher to teach about the entire world in addition to the national cultural tradition of one's own country. But it is our duty; that is what a teacher's role in society is and necessarily must be. We are responsible for helping to define for the young who we are as a people and as members of a locality as well, and how we ought to behave as a nation and as members of the human race at large. This is what teaching, and specifically historical teaching, has always tried to do, has always done, and inescapably continues to do. I wish you well, teachers in my audience, in the effort to adapt our national traditions successfully to ever-changing circumstances, in a world where so many voices and noises compete for the attention of young people.

[3] See William H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964, new ed. 1991).

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Nothing is more critical to the future well-being of those who are bearers of the cultural tradition of our own country, the various groups within it, and all of humanity.

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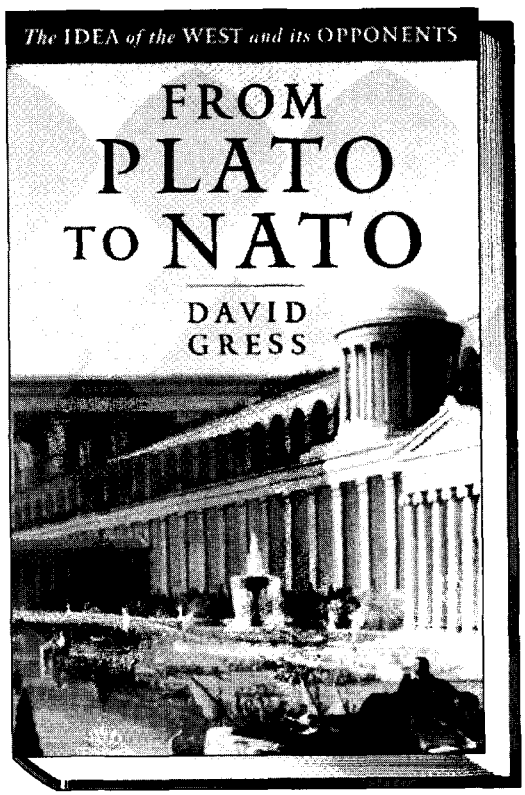
Lessons from the Western Past—Informing the World's Future.



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Multiculturalism in History

Hellenic and Roman Antiquity

by David Gress

Two assumptions prevalent these days among contemporary social critics are, first, that multiculturalism is a necessary and long-overdue antidote to the Euro-American chauvinism and racism characteristic of Western civilization and, secondly, that chauvinism and racism have been uniquely virulent in the West. The planted axiom behind this second assumption, in turn, is that other societies have not based their identity on racial or ethnic hierarchies to the degree those of Europe and North America have and that the norm in history is in fact a lack of racial discrimination. The reality, as serious scholars have long been aware, is both more complicated and more interesting. Indeed, the notion that the norm outside Europe and America has been religious, racial, and political toleration and openness and a lack of xenophobia would surprise most historians, who traditionally have identified the consistent effort to overcome xenophobia and racism as a unique feature precisely of Western civilization, with its roots in medieval Christianity, the Reformation, and the secular Enlightenment. And the most important cultural antecedents of modern, liberal Western society were the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome. Therefore, whether or not Western societies are in fact exceptionally tolerant or exceptionally racist, one would expect to find origins of those features in what some people still call classical civilization, especially the "golden ages" of fifth-century B.C. Athens and first-century B.C. Rome. Of course, the ancient world was hardly subsumed in those two short eras, and they should not be regarded as peaks surrounded by valleys of decadence. But they have assuredly had the strongest influence on later eras of Western history.

Ancient Mediterranean civilization is worth examining for another reason as well, namely, that it is an example of a culture remote, in time at least, from the modern West and therefore can serve as a test case of the proposition that non-Western cultures have been less ethnocentric and more hospitable to multiculturalism than our own.

A final word by way of introduction: the contemporary ideology of multiculturalism has been almost entirely shaped by a narrow liberal elite in the United States, where issues of race, identity, and inequality are dominant

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preoccupations. The modern concept creates a huge initial handicap when asking about multiculturalism in antiquity, because issues of race as contemporary American elites understand them—and even the idea of the nation in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century sense—did not exist. Hence the danger that contemporary American preoccupations will color, or rather discolor, our portrait of multiculturalism in the ancient world, not least because the most publicized recent work on the subject is *Black Athena* by Martin Bernal. The reader must take care to remember, therefore, that concerns such as Bernal's are really "ours" and have nothing to do with the people of the ancient Mediterranean.

Martin Bernal and *Black Athena*

Martin Bernal is a sinologist turned archaeologist and linguist who, in 1987 and 1991, published the first two of what will ultimately be four volumes of *Black Athena.* His basic thesis was that the ancient Egyptians were black Africans, conquered Greece, and thus created classical civilization. Since no one else outside extreme Afrocentric circles had ever made this assertion before, Bernal was also obliged to argue that all classical scholarship for two centuries had systematically misinterpreted the Greeks in order to turn them from Africans into proto-Europeans. His purpose, he wrote, was to "lessen European cultural arrogance."[1] Bernal's volumes are the chief items of evidence adduced by those who claim that, whereas the modern West is exceptionally racist, ancient Greece was a multicultural and even multicultural*ist* civilization in the sense of being open, tolerant, and non-xenophobic, and that these features are attributable to its African origins.

Bernal rested much of his case for the African origins of classical Greece on what he claimed the Greeks themselves believed. To sustain that case he asserted that a number of Greek legends contained some kind of record of actual historical events including the founding of famous Greek city-states by wandering strangers from afar. For example, in the *Suppliants*, a play of Aeschylus, an Egyptian prince, Danaus, flees to the town of Argos, where he receives asylum from the native king Pelasgus, whose people are variously called Pelasgians and Hellenes, that is, Greeks. Danaus's claim for asylum is based on a blood tie to the people of Argos since they, too, are said to be descended from Io, who had fled to Egypt long before. In *Black Athena*, Bernal took the story of Danaus and the Danaids as proof that a thousand years before Aeschylus, Egyptians (whom Bernal elsewhere equates to black Africans) settled Greece and introduced civilization. That assertion in turn allows him to claim that Zeus must be the Egyptian god Osiris, renamed by Aeschylus as part of

[1] Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 2 vols. to date (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press 1987–), vol. 1, p. 73. A comprehensive selection of generally devastating criticisms of Bernal's theories and results—described as "a whirling confusion of half-digested reading, bold linguistic supposition, and preconceived dogma"—is Mary R. Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers, eds., *Black Athena Revisited* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Quote on p. 277, from Emily Vermeule, "The World Turned Upside Down."

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his project (cleverly detected by Bernal) to reinterpret a true story of Egyptian military conquest in the mid-second millennium B.C. as a story of Greek hosts welcoming indigent strangers. Indeed, the very title of the play, *Hiketides* in Greek, must, according to Bernal, be related to the Egyptian *hk hst*, the name that the real Egyptians gave to those who ruled their land for some generations around 1600 B.C. and who Bernal believes were also behind the Egyptian conquest of Greece. The classicist Edith Hall called this "one of the most implausible etymological suggestions in the book."[2]

Bernal's agenda is to recover what he considers authentic features of Greek civilization and attack the dominant image of the Greeks as the first white Europeans, who in their patriotism, democratic ideals, philosophy, literature, and art inspired all that is great in the later West. Bernal charges that the modern West's virulent racism was a product of this image of the Greeks because it seemed to confirm modern Europeans and Americans in their contempt for what Rudyard Kipling called "lesser breeds without the law"—the black and brown people, who lacked the virtues derived from ancient Greece.

There is, of course, a serious logical flaw at the core of Bernal's argument independent of his archaeology, linguistics, and cultural history, whose merits, experts agree, are minimal. Rather, the flaw is in his *ideological* argument. Either the Greeks were the first Europeans or they were not. If Europe was bad, imperialist, and racist, but Greek civilization great, then the Greeks could not be the first Europeans. Rather, they must have been the opposite of Bernal's image of the Europeans, that is, they must have been multiculturalist. Precisely this multiculturalism was, we recall, Bernal's main claim: Greece was "a second Gift of the Nile."[3] If, however, the Greeks were in any way racist themselves (as when Bernal referred to "passionate Greek chauvinism"[4]), then it must follow that they inherited that, too, from Africa. And if that is so, then his effort to idealize Africa and demonize Europe collapses.

Bernal's ideological problem derives from the single word "barbarian." The distinction between civilization and barbarism is one of the most notorious and indisputably Greek contributions to culture, and a cottage industry has sprung up among postmodernist classicists to analyze how the Greeks "constructed" a proto-racist discourse of contempt to define and denigrate non-Greeks. Some of these scholars are close to Bernal in their distaste for Western liberal democracy, but the thrust of their work is to undermine admiration of the Greeks by showing that they were, in important ways, the authors of ideas crucial to modern racism. Thus, they implicitly subvert Bernal, who wants to maintain the glory that was Greece but attribute it to Africans, and by inheritance, African-Americans.[5]

[2] Edith Hall, "When Is a Myth Not a Myth? Bernal's 'Ancient Model,'" *Black Athena Revisited*, p. 342.

[3] Ibid., p. 178.

[4] Bernal, *Black Athena*, vol. 1, p. 100.

[5] As the classicist Richard Jenkyns pointed out, this *idée fixe* of Bernal's, that black Americans need a high culture in their racial pedigree, is patronizing and, ironically, Eurocentric. Richard Jenkyns, "Bernal and the Nineteenth Century," *Black Athena Revisited*, p. 420.

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This cottage industry was itself inspired by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, one of the most influential works of cultural revisionism of recent decades.[6] Said charged that European travelers to the Near East and scholars of Islam approached their subjects, not in a spirit of academic curiosity and openness, but of imperialism and chauvinism. The main product of European studies of Islam and Asia, Said argued, was a false image of "the Orient" as a region of despotism and superstition, confirming Europeans' sense of superiority and justifying their colonial regimes. Transferring the method of *Orientalism* to ancient Greece, it becomes easy to demonstrate that the Greek idea of the barbarian was not a response to any realities, but an ideological construct designed to bolster ethnic identity and confirm feelings of superiority.[7] However, to do that is to follow Bernal down the path to unsustainable and misleading dichotomies. The Greeks and the other ancient Mediterranean civilizations were not either racist *or* anti-racist, multiculturalist *or* chauvinist; and in any case the category of multiculturalism is a late-twentieth-century American invention which cannot be applied to the ancient world without causing confusion.

What must instead be done is to describe the main stages in ancient attitudes toward ethnic and cultural diversity—period. In the course of that exercise, we may discover that something analogous to modern multiculturalism did appear once or twice in the ancient world, but in the neutral sense of welcoming strangeness and difference. The ancients were not guilt-ridden modern liberals.

With apologies to the reader for that lengthy, but unfortunately necessary introduction, let us now move to an especially revealing episode from antiquity, followed by sections on ancient views of ethnic diversity in the period stretching from Homer to the fifth century B.C., the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, and the long era of late Hellenism, which offers interesting multicultural features but has often been misunderstood as an era of decadence. The essay will close with some reflections on the transition from the ancient to the medieval world and to what some scholars have called the "formation of a persecuting society." In other words, the concluding question is whether the Christian West that succeeded ancient Roman society in Europe was notably intolerant and anti-multicultural compared to what went before. We will end where we began, with the question of whether non-Western societies are in any meaningful sense more tolerant or multiculturalist than the West.

The Gladiator from Hell

Early in the year 203 A.D., Roman authorities in Carthage in the province of Africa (present-day Tunisia and coastal Algeria) arrested a number of alleged

[6] For example, the third edition of the standard reference work, the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), contains an entry on "orientalism" in which Said is lavishly praised and Bernal lauded as "interesting, though in several respects maverick."

[7] Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), showed how to describe the origins of the Greek distinction of Hellene and barbarian without treating the Greeks as proto-racists.

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Christians. At this time, Christian belief was not in itself a crime, and the regular attitude of the Roman state was, as the historian Tacitus put it, that affronts to the gods were for gods, not men, to punish. Nevertheless, local persecution of Christians did break out from time to time, usually because Christians refused to sacrifice for the health of the emperor when asked to do so by his representative. The time of the universal, organized persecutions of 249–251 and 303–311 had not yet come. It is rarely possible to determine just what caused a particular outbreak. Most likely the Christians, who at this time probably numbered less than half of one percent of the Roman Empire, were chosen as victims when the state needed scapegoats without strong social support.[8] In this particular instance, the authorities needed victims because the emperor's birthday was approaching and, to satisfy the crowd, had to be celebrated in the municipal arena with gladiatorial combat and the spectacle of wild animals mangling and devouring criminals.

Among the Christians arrested were two remarkable women: Perpetua, a twenty-two-year-old mother, and Felicitas, a slave who was eight months pregnant. When they were asked to sacrifice for the health of the emperor, Perpetua's father, a pagan and upright citizen, pleaded with his daughter to do so. The governor, too, appeared none too eager to condemn the daughter of a prominent citizen, but Perpetua was stubborn. "I am a Christian," she said, "and I will not sacrifice." She was forthwith sentenced *ad bestias*, "to the wild animals," in the arena. Some time, perhaps a few weeks, elapsed between the sentence and the games. At the end of that time, Perpetua dictated an account of the Christians' trials and imprisonment that has come down to us as one of the more fascinating documents of the ancient world. Perpetua reported in her narrative of prison a series of visions in the last of which she found herself in the arena. "And I see a huge crowd of people waiting, and because I knew that I had been sentenced to the animals, I was surprised that they weren't sending any animals at me. And across from me emerged an Egyptian of hideous appearance with his helpers to fight against me."[9] The vision then takes a startling turn. "They stripped me, and I was turned into a male." As a male, who however continues to be referred to grammatically as a female, Perpetua defeats the huge Egyptian who, she realizes, represents the last attempt of the forces of hell to undermine her courage and resolution in the face of death.

Bernal, who implied that the ancient Egyptians were in fact black Africans, could take heart from this passage, for what Perpetua meant was "a black man." Note the "hideous appearance." It was generally, but not always, true that ancient Mediterranean people did not ascribe "general inferiority to any ethnic group . . . solely on the basis of body-type."[10] Blackness sometimes

[8] Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 7, for the estimate of Christian numbers in 200 A.D.

[9] *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, 10.5–6 in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, ed. H. Musurillo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), my translation. The colloquial tone is Perpetua's.

[10] Antony Spawforth in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. "race." According to the Hellenistic ethnographer Agatharcides, only children would be upset by the dark color of Ethiopians (i.e. black Africans). For that and other examples, see Frank Snowden, Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

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carried a negative symbolic and psychological charge, in much the same way as later Europeans spoke of "black magic" as the devil's art. To the ancients, black was not only the skin color of certain exotic people, but a symbol of dark forces. The poet Juvenal and the philosopher Plutarch, who was at least a partial Stoic, regarded black as the color of inhabitants of the underworld, and to meet them was bad luck. Interestingly, modern scholars have distinguished a "good black" and an "evil black" in ancient imagery and popular culture.[11] The identification of black skin with the underworld was rather rare; more prevalent were images of black people as models of exotic physical beauty and evidence of a beautiful soul.

Usually when the ancients spoke of black Africans, they called them Ethiopians, the dwellers south of Egypt whom Greeks and Romans recognized as different from Egyptians themselves. Why then did Perpetua refer to the black man in her vision as an Egyptian? Because the Christians had inherited the Jewish condemnation of Egypt as the land of bondage. In Christian theology, "Egypt" came to stand as a metaphor for the world, which was subject to the devil. "Egypt" symbolized the state of the soul's bondage to earth, matter, and carnal desire. Hence Perpetua's "hideous Egyptian" combined the non-Christian symbolism of blackness as the color of hell with the Judeo-Christian identification of Egypt with bondage. For her vision to make sense as foreshadowing her final victory over the world, the last and most ferocious assault of the devil had to take the form of a black man from Egypt.

From Homer to Herodotus

We turn now to the long-term character and evolution of ancient views of diversity. At first glance, it might make sense to begin with the Hellenistic era, for it was then, starting with the conquests of Alexander the Great in 334–323 B.C., that ethnic and cultural encounters on a vast scale began profoundly to affect and change Greek civilization. To begin with Alexander, however, would leave out Homer and Herodotus, who are essential if we are to make sense of how the Greeks were conditioned to view members of other cultures whom they encountered.

Homer's *Iliad* is not only the greatest war story of all time, but also the first saga of East-West conflict. The tale of the Greek expedition to the Asian city of Troy set up, at the beginning of Hellenic civilization, the polarity of a Greek West and an alien, hostile East that was later confirmed by the Persian Wars interpreted by Herodotus. Thus, the *Iliad* bequeathed a notion of Greek identity contrasted to a hostile "other," which later became the "barbarian." It may therefore seem that Homer's *Odyssey* is a better source of early multicultural attitudes by dint of the hero's travels. In the first line of the epic, Odysseus is called *polutropos*, which means versatile and much-traveled as well as one who

[11] L. Cracco Ruggini, "Il Negro Buono e il Negro Malvagio nel Mondo Classico" (The Good Negro and the Evil Negro in the Classical World), in *Conoscenze Etniche e Rapporti di Convivenza nell'Antichità*, Contributi dell'Istituto di Storia Antica, No. 6 (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1979).

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has suffered many turns of fate. He "saw the cities of many men and knew their mind, many evils plagued his spirit on the sea, as he was striving to save his life and bring his companions home." If Greek civilization included, as it surely did, extraordinary impulses of curiosity, adventure, and hunger for new experience, it is in the *Odyssey* that these find their symbolic as well as chronological origin.

Two multicultural principles dominate the *Odyssey*. The first is that of curiosity and the often painful cost of gaining new experiences. The theme of "learning through suffering" and the related idea that "he who acts will incur pain" became standard elements of Greek identity. The other, which Homer shared with many traditional cultures, is that guests are precious and that hospitality creates reciprocal and sacred obligations. Much of the indignation aroused by the suitors of Penelope in Ithaca is caused by their abuse of hospitality, an insult to humanity and the gods which they compound by refusing hospitality to others.

The two themes are sometimes combined, for example in book 17, where Odysseus arrives in disguise as a beggar at his own palace and begs for food from the suitors. One of them rebukes the old swineherd Eumaeus for bringing this beggar into the palace, "as though we don't have enough of them already." Eumaeus responds by reminding the suitors of the virtue of welcoming strangers: "Who of himself ever seeks out and invites a stranger from elsewhere, unless that stranger is one of those who are masters of a craft, a prophet, a healer of ills, a builder, or perhaps a divine minstrel who gives delight by singing. For such men are welcomed all over the boundless earth."

But not everyone sees Odysseus as the symbolic founder of multicultural openness in antiquity. According to those who accuse the Greeks of proto-Orientalism in Said's sense, Odysseus prefigures a philosophy that does not really seek to embrace the other, but only to confirm itself. His voyage, after all, was a voyage home, and all his experiences amounted only to a disregard of the other. Doubtless there is some truth in this perspective, but the point about the Greeks is not that they thought themselves superior or interpreted foreign ways to suit their own prejudices, but that they overcame those barriers through a curiosity that was more than self-congratulation. All traditional societies did the former; perhaps none, other than the Greeks, consistently did the latter.

The figure of Odysseus pervaded all later Western art and literature, as contemporary examples show.[12] That a magazine published for Greeks living abroad, especially in America, should call itself *Odyssey* is not surprising. More startling perhaps is that a group of historians and literary theorists in post-communist Russia adopted Odysseus as a symbol of a new internationalism when they founded a journal entitled *Ulysses*. Their opening editorial statement read:

> Our Ulysses is a voyage across the countries and the eras of world culture. Everywhere Ulysses is a guest and a stranger. A culture cannot recognize itself except at the frontier of other spiritual worlds. Ulysses is our own cultural conscience which deals with other cultures and is able both to listen and to be surprised. By embarking on this endless

[12] W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963).

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> voyage contemporary culture sets out to find itself. Nothing is as hard as understanding oneself: it is no accident that Ulysses was not recognized in his native island. Ulysses is a thread that connects different cultures to each other. He can be called the first anthropologist or student of cultures, the one by whom cultures, so to speak, come into existence. He is a symbol of uncertainty but also of the culture's hope of survival despite the trials without precedent that it has undergone in this century.[13]

If the basis of genuine, as opposed to merely ideological, multiculturalism is curiosity about alien ways of life combined with the ability to question the cherished presuppositions of one's own culture, then the Greeks of the archaic and classical eras (600–400 B.C.) were the world's first multiculturalists. The empirical and philosophical basis of such multiculturalism was the anthropological method invented by the Greeks which they, in the words of American anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, "carried further and carried out more systematically than . . . any other people whose records have survived."[14]

One inspiration for this Greek multiculturalism was the *Odyssey.* Another arose when it turned out that the East-West polarity and the idea of the barbarian could also give rise to relativism, which happened at the moment when people began using the barbarian, the non-Greek foreigner, to ask questions about themselves. The Greek-born French political thinker Cornélius Castoriadis defined that moment as follows:

> Until the Greeks and outside the Greco-Western tradition, societies are based on the principle of strict closure. "Our" vision of the world is the only one that makes sense and is true—the others are bizarre, inferior, perverse, bad, disobedient [to divine order]. The true interest in the others was born with the Greeks and this interest is never anything but an aspect of the critical and questioning gaze that they cast on their own institutions. That interest is therefore part of the movement to democracy and philosophy launched by the Greeks.[15]

An early example of this is the philosopher Xenophanes (ca. 600 B.C.), who observed that the Thracians, who had blue eyes and red hair, worshipped blue-eyed and red-haired gods. If horses had gods, Xenophanes went on, their gods would be horses. What appears to modern Westerners as a piece of cleverness was a stunning imaginative leap for the time. Xenophanes arrived at the idea that we make gods in our own image and immediately moved on to conclude that if gods exist, we cannot assume they will look, act, or be like us. In another fragment, he noted that Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods behavior "that men despise and condemn—theft, adultery, and deception."[16] Note again the double leap outside the bounds of traditional thought: the gods of Homer and Hesiod, our gods, behave disgracefully *by human standards.* Therefore, either these gods are frauds or else human standards of conduct

[13] Quoted in François Hartog, *La Mémoire d'Ulysse* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

[14] Quoted in Frank Snowden, Jr., "Bernal's 'Blacks' and the Afrocentrists," *Black Athena Revisited,* p. 127.

[15] Quoted in Hartog, *Mémoire d'Ulysse,* p. 13.

[16] Fragments 169, 171–2 in Geoffrey S. Kirk and John E. Raven, eds., *The Presocratic Philosophers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

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have nothing to do with such gods. It was only a short move from such an idea to philosophy itself, that is, to free speculation about nature and justice as realities in themselves unrelated to any divine origin or human social reality. We are at the start of the passage from the idea of heteronomy, the idea that law comes from somewhere else, to autonomy, the idea that society itself is the source of law. And if society is the source of law, then the formulation of that law is the matter of politics, the merely human struggle for power, and there is no universal law given by gods or anyone else. "Custom [*nomos*] is the king of all things," said Pindar.[17]

There is no universal law, because no two polities are the same. In accounting for differences among societies and their values, the Greeks arrived at yet another original explanation. This was the idea that each people occupied a unique environmental niche and that the range of customs and morality found in the world was due to differences in climate and nurture that shaped its inhabitants and imposed limits it could not transcend. Hence, differences implied no moral ranking, and the Persians were not worse than the Greeks, merely otherwise.

Bernal, as we saw, gave Egypt credit for Greek civilization. He was wrong, but the idea of Egypt did play a great role in Greek culture. In the *Odyssey*, Egypt was a remote land known mainly for its great riches. By the time of Plato, the theme of Egyptian wealth had yielded to the overarching theme of Egypt as a land of superior, ancient wisdom and esoteric knowledge. Between Xenophanes and Plato stands Herodotus (ca. 450 B.C.), who was deeply impressed by the great age of Egyptian culture and the fact that its beliefs and customs seemed so often to be the opposite of those of the Greeks. The Egyptians did everything backwards, he said, and even the laws of nature seemed reversed in Egypt—a radical strengthening of the already established principle of Greek anthropology that "custom is king" and that *all* rules and mores varied with environment and circumstance.

A corollary of this Greek anthropological insight was that each people must naturally prefer and want to defend its own customs. Affection for one's culture was natural and something not to be despised or brutally overridden by strangers. Herodotus made this point clearly in relation to Egypt, which was conquered by the Persians in the 520s B.C. Cambyses, the victorious king and a loyal servant of the monotheistic Persian state religion, offended the Egyptians by opening graves and staring at mummies and laughing at the images of gods in temples. He even, in some cases, had the statues removed from the sanctuaries and burned. "All in all I have to say it's quite obvious that Cambyses was completely crazy." Herodotus casually defined ethnic and religious chauvinism as insanity—a remarkable expression of the Athenian enlightenment. In the next sentence Herodotus stated that if you asked anyone to say what customs [*nomous*] were the best of all, everyone after reflection would say his own. "So

[17] Fragment 169a, line 1, in *The Loeb Classical Library Edition of Pindar*, ed. and trans. William H. Race (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), vol. 2, p. 384.

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then, each people considers its own customs and ways of life to be by far the best."[18] Herodotus was advocating a *realistic* multiculturalism. We all trust and like what we have inherited, what we know to be right *for us*. And it is folly or even insanity to despise the customs of others just because they are strange. Rather, we should be curious and want to learn.

Of course, not all that Herodotus reported about Egypt was true (some scholars maintain that virtually none of it was), but throughout antiquity Egypt remained hard for the Greeks to escape, and their dominant image of it was that of an ancient culture, powerful not in armed force, but in its secret and venerable insights into supernatural reality. Greek mercenaries in Persian service, who left graffiti on the great statue of Ramses II, did not call themselves Hellenes, but *alloglossoi*, speakers of a foreign tongue, because that is how the Egyptians defined them. They had taken over the natives' description of themselves.

In the absence of universal law, differences implied no moral ranking.

Herodotus launched another and perhaps even more influential image into the great current of Western cultural understandings, and that was the polarity, already mentioned, of East and West, barbarian and Greek, despotism and liberty. Herodotus respected the Persians, "of all folk known to me the most wont to honor valiant warriors," and fully capable of understanding the relative merits of democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy.[19] Cyrus, the first great king, preferred ruling a few men in a poor land to being the master of many slaves, contrary to his descendant Xerxes. In Herodotus's account, it was the despotic hubris of Xerxes that led him to overreach himself, thinking that his empire was so rich and powerful that "neither the Greeks nor any other dwellers in the West can withstand me."[20]

The Persian Wars defined the dichotomy of barbarian and Greek. Barbarians were weak-willed, emotional, credulous, effeminate substance abusers subject to despotism—people like Cambyses, who knew no barrier between desire and act, or like Xerxes, who fell victim to unrealistic ambition. Softened by opulence and inured to slavery, the Persian was incapable of liberty and had forgotten the strict virtue of his ancestors. Faced with the seemingly miraculous victory of a few Greeks over the Persian war machine, Herodotus turned his sights away from the alien lands of Egypt, Scythia, and Persia and asked, What did the *Greeks* have in common, since they were often at war with each other and many of them joined the Persian invasion? The answer, as the Athenian envoys told the Spartans who were afraid that Athens might go over to the enemy, was that they had common ancestors, speech, and customs, shared the same gods, and worshipped them in the same way.

For the Greeks of the archaic and classical eras—from Homer to Alexander—encounters with the other were encounters with the marvelous or

[18] Herodotus, *Histories* 3.38, my translation.
[19] Ibid., 7.238.
[20] Ibid., 5.111.

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the dangerous. They took place in the framework of an evolving anthropology of curiosity and difference, accompanied and complemented from Herodotus on by an overarching dichotomy of Greek versus barbarian. Plato, coming at the end of this first period and on the threshold of the Hellenistic age, admired both Persian and Egyptian wisdom, and attributed the invention of writing to Egypt in his late dialogue *Timaeus*, which became a favorite of mystics and esoteric philosophers in late antiquity, Islam, and the Renaissance. In that work, Plato told a story about the Athenian poet and statesman Solon's visit to Egypt, an event which would have taken place some two and a half centuries before the dialogue was written. In the dialogue, Plato had an Egyptian priest say to his visitor: "O Solon Solon, you Greeks are always children, and there is no Greek who is an old man. . . . You are all young in your souls, and you have in them no old belief handed down by ancient tradition nor any knowledge that is hoary with age."[21] Bernal took this story to be true, which it almost certainly was not. The Egyptian priest was speaking for Plato, and by Plato's time the notion of ancient Egyptian wisdom was firmly established. Plato's multiculturalism consisted in setting up Egyptian wisdom as older and better than the Greek irreverence, inventiveness, and curiosity exemplified by Xenophanes and Herodotus.

The Early Hellenistic Era

From Alexander through late Hellenism, multicultural encounters were for Greeks and other Mediterraneans also matters of power and conflict: who was to rule, and whose rules were to count. Plato had already anticipated this question in the most important of his late dialogues, the *Laws*. In this work, three sages meet on the site of a proposed new settlement to determine its constitution and customs. The situation was familiar to Greeks, who had founded new towns all around the Mediterranean. The constitutional and social debate in the *Laws* was therefore not a utopian one, as was Plato's *Republic*, but a pragmatic inquiry as to "what laws should apply in a real existing city so that it will flourish?"

In the *Timaeus*, Plato said that Egyptian age and wisdom were superior to Greek youth and brashness, apparently repudiating the tradition of Xenophanes, Herodotus, and other Greek proto-anthropologists. Nevertheless, the *Laws* continued that tradition in another way, namely, by saying that no existing set of rules was right for the new city, but that those rules could and should be arrived at through reasoned debate, based on experience and on the kind of anthropological insight acquired as a result of Xenophanes' enlightened criticism of inherited religion and the curiosity of Herodotus. In this respect, the *Laws* anticipated the cosmopolitan multiculturalism that was one face of the Hellenistic age.

[21] Plato, *Timaeus*, 22b, quoted and translated by Jenkyns, "Bernal and the Nineteenth Century," p. 415.

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The Hellenistic era was the thousand-year result of the conquests of Alexander in 334–323 B.C. Its dominant feature was that Greek artistic styles, customs, and language spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean and far into the hinterlands of Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and even Afghanistan. Eastern religions, cults, and customs gradually incorporated Greek dress, until by the early centuries of the Christian era we find, for example, inscriptions to pre-Islamic Arab divinities formulated in Greek according to the cosmopolitan Hellenistic language of worship. Such an interpretation of Hellenism was not always prevalent. Until the later twentieth century, leading scholars of the Hellenistic period tended to see its main theme as one of culture clash between a (somewhat decadent) Greek civilization and the cults and customs of the perennial "East." Newer interpretations of the Hellenistic era, however, tend to see it as a remarkable and fruitful blend in which the Eastern influences were Hellenized as a condition of their efficacy and creativity in the new geopolitical and multicultural context of the post-Alexandrian epoch.

It is important to warn once again against interpreting ancient Mediterranean civilization in the terms of contemporary multiculturalist ideology. If Hellenism was multicultural, it was so on its own terms. Having noted that the Greeks developed and deployed a remarkable and relaxed cultural relativism, we must also note that Hellenistic interest and involvement in non-Hellenic cultures and customs was not fully comparable to the methods of modern anthropology. In the Hellenistic age, as the historian Arnaldo Momigliano pointed out, the Greeks confronted four other civilizations: the Roman, the Celtic, the Judaic, and the Persian. The Greeks had known the Persians for a long time. The interest in Persia changed from Herodotus's study of its power and political organization to later writers' examination of its ancient Oriental wisdom. Momigliano maintained that this later interest in Persian wisdom was merely one result among many of the revulsion from political interests in Greece. Political debate no longer had a point in Greece after the Macedonian and Roman conquests. Greek philosophers were therefore tempted to look to "alien wisdom" for inspiration; their interest, Momigliano held, had little to do with the real religion of the Persians and more with how an imagined Persian wisdom could assuage the thirst for religious illumination and esoteric insights.[22]

The Romans appeared on the horizons of Greek ethnography and politics in the third century B.C., and it was via the Romans that the Greeks came to know of the Celts, the inhabitants of central and western Europe at the time. It was also the Romans who catalyzed Greek knowledge of the Jews, which might seem odd since Palestine was part of Alexander's empire long before the Romans arrived in the eastern Mediterranean. Yet this apparent lack of early Greek interest in the Jews points to the central weakness of Hellenism as a multicultural civilization: "It had all the instruments for knowing other civilizations—except command of languages. It had all the marks of a conquering

[22] Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 2–6, 147–48.

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and ruling upper class—except faith in its own wisdom."[23] *If a cultural elite does not have confidence in itself, it cannot be truly multicultural,* for it will not have the energy or courage to investigate others for what they are. It will seek in others only what will assuage its own weaknesses.

The Greeks never learned foreign languages, the only great exception being the translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint, which was commissioned by Alexandrian Jews to allow them to participate in Hellenistic culture in the only acceptable way, that is, in Greek.[24] The cultural conversation among Greeks, Romans, and Jews was started by Romans and Jews, not Greeks.

Hellenistic multiculturalism thus had two aspects. One was the day-to-day Hellenization of language and, to a large degree, of customs across the eastern Mediterranean. This was an unplanned process, which eventually produced a rich, syncretic civilization. The other was the conscious reflection on history, fate, and religious belief of historians, philosophers, poets, and mystics. This aspect suffered from an invincible parochialism. It was almost as though the intellectual exuberance of Xenophanes and Herodotus had lost contact with social reality. The willingness to speculate was still there, but had become an end in itself. The Hellenistic thinkers did not move from Xenophanes' reflections on horses and gods to investigating the actual beliefs and customs of the many new peoples with whom the Greek world was now in contact. Instead, their speculations served increasingly to feed their own hunger for reassurance and salvation.

Greek thinkers in the Hellenistic age had a choice. Those with interests mainly in history and politics, such as Polybius or Diodorus of Sicily, chose to reflect on how Greek elites could best adapt to the power of Rome. Those with interests mainly in religion looked to an imaginary Persia and an imaginary Egypt. The irony of this aspect of Hellenistic multiculturalism was that the philosophers and mystics conceived of their interest in Egyptian and other "alien wisdom" as genuinely multicultural. They sincerely believed that they were going beyond the boundaries of their culture, not realizing that in many cases what they found was merely the mirror image of their own psychological and religious needs.

In the Hellenistic age, the Romans were the better multiculturalists. Nor is that surprising. Greek civilization was culturally dominant but politically weak, and members of a dominant but demoralized culture do not initiate multicultural encounters which imply their taking the other seriously rather than taking from him what they themselves need. Here was a difference from the age of Xenophanes and Herodotus, when the Greeks had not yet acquired that sense of cultural superiority coupled with self-doubt. By the time they became seriously committed to the eastern Mediterranean, the Romans knew that they were militarily superior, but culturally inferior. In 196 B.C., the Roman commander

[23] Ibid., p. 149.

[24] It was known as the Septuagint (Seventy) because, according to legend, seventy sages translated the text independently, and when the translations were compared, all, thanks to divine guidance, were identical.

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Flamininus addressed the Greeks assembled at the Olympic games. He was leading a force sent to subdue the Achaean League of Greek cities, and the outcome of his campaign was to drive yet another nail into the coffin of Greek independence. Nevertheless, he felt obliged to defend Roman policy to its victims. "We are here to protect you," he said in effect, "because you have a superior culture, but we have the force to maintain security." If the Romans did not establish control, the Greeks might think they had preserved their independence, but in fact they would simply have laid themselves open to internecine war and invasion from the east. The long-term result was captured by the poet Horace a century and a half later, when he said that "defeated Greece defeated her savage conqueror and introduced civilization to rustic Latium."

If a cultural elite lacks confidence in itself, it cannot be truly multicultural.

A contemporary of Horace, the ethnographer Strabo, developed the notions of Herodotus, Hippocrates, and Aristotle on how climate shaped cultural variation and how the Greek climate in particular produced the moderate and modest character of the Greeks. Strabo extended the rewards of a challenging and beneficial climate to Romans and indeed to all of Europe, which was, he said, both varied in form and admirably adapted by nature for the development of excellence in men and governments.[25]

The Romans both admired the Greeks and despised them for having fallen from military glory in the days of the Persian Wars to enfeebled subservience to Rome. One of the important subsidiary threads of cultural change through the following centuries which contradicted Strabo's philhellenism was that some Romans transferred to Greece what had earlier been the Greek image of the decadent and dangerous East. By the early fourth century A.D., this westward shift of the line dividing manly and honest West from servile and timorous East came to encompass another multicultural dimension: the vigorous West now included not only Romans, but immigrants and neighbors beyond the frontier.[26]

Before the Greeks became weak Orientals in Roman imagination, they were known as gourmets and libertines. The city of Corinth, for instance, had a reputation for luxury and debauchery. "It is not given to every man to visit Corinth," the Romans said with a frisson of shock and excitement. Throughout the second and first centuries B.C., when Roman power was rapidly growing, conservative Roman elites fought what they considered a doomed, but obligatory, rearguard action against Eastern corruptions, which now came not from Persia or Egypt, but Greece itself.

This reaction went down to apparent defeat when Julius Caesar introduced an oriental imperialism to Rome itself. The conservatives killed him, but were quickly defeated by Octavian, who, styling himself Augustus, took supreme

[25] Strabo, *Geography*, 2.5.26.

[26] For example, in the *Panegyric to Constantine* of 313, as reported by L. Cracco Ruggini, "Culture in Dialogo: La Preistoria dell'Idea di Europa" (Cultures in Dialogue: The Prehistory of the Idea of Europe), in *Storia di Roma*, ed. Aldo Schiavone (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 358.

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power. But he did so by draping his autocracy in traditionalist garb and resurrecting the "customs of our ancestors." The first two centuries after Augustus were an era of a paradoxical multiculturalism, in which Greek philosophy and a growing variety of Eastern mysticisms and esoteric teachings, all of them in Hellenized form, swept westwards.

Late Hellenism

Using the label "late Hellenism" to describe the era from the first through the sixth centuries A.D. privileges the Greek-speaking regions of the empire. It is useful to keep this essay in reasonable bounds, but is not fair to the Latin-speaking Westerners, who performed heroic multicultural tasks of their own in bringing Roman civilization to the nations and tribes of central and western Europe, especially after many of those tribes invaded and settled in the empire starting at the end of the fourth century. Few multiculturalists today would describe the conversion of the Germanic tribes to Christianity as a multicultural exercise, since it implied a transformation of native culture. Yet, under a wider definition of multiculturalism that better reflects ancient realities, the process of Christianization in the West as well as the East was profoundly and unavoidably multicultural. The message preached by Augustine of Canterbury to the Anglo-Saxons in the early seventh century was both the same and radically different from that preached by the apostle Paul to the Corinthians over five hundred years earlier.

The most important development, from a multicultural perspective, in the early phases of late Hellenism was the spread of the philosophy known as Stoicism. In fact, next to the unabashed relativism and early anthropological speculation of the late archaic era of Xenophanes around 600 B.C., the high Stoicism of Plutarch, Aristides, and Marcus Aurelius in the second century A.D. marks the second moment of genuine multiculturalism in antiquity.

Stoics held that "all men are by nature equal" and that the wise man, who understood the universe, was a *kosmou polites*, or "cosmopolitan." The wise man, who lived according to Stoic precepts, did not think of himself as a citizen of any particular country, for unseemly attachment to a place, city, or family was just another of the irrational ties that could produce inappropriate desires and emotions. The Stoic must seek the good of all creatures equally.

The world, or universe—both are translations of the Greek *kosmos*—must be accepted with gratitude as offering to the wise man the opportunity for a life of modesty, self-control, and duty. "Accept all that comes," wrote the emperor Marcus, "for it leads to the health of the universe." This Stoic belief that everything was for the best in the best of all possible worlds was not silly optimism, but a necessary realism. Without such realism, you risked high expectations, consequent disappointment, and unseemly rage and desire. The good life was one in which the emotions were controlled, bodily gestures and acts measured and slow, and the state of the mind and soul one of resigned balance.

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Stoics rejected ethnic and political boundaries and considered no city, nation, or empire better than any other. Stoics conceived of themselves as unselfish and were devoted to the common good because the common good was the precondition of individual flourishing. "What does not benefit the hive does not benefit the bee." Ultimately, however, all human action was vain, for human prejudices could not be changed, and even emperors died and were forgotten.

In practice, Stoicism contributed less to true multicultural exchange and understanding than to a sentimental image of the world as the *cosmopolis* of all right-thinking people. Stoics rejected existing ethnic and political boundaries, but they divided mankind into those who belonged to a community of reason and were therefore citizens of the world, and those who lived as slaves to undisciplined feelings. Stoicism resembled many later movements of intellectuals who were convinced that the passions driving common folk were illegitimate and a barrier to universal harmony. If only those passions could be eradicated and all people would come to share the Stoics' high enlightenment, then a world community run by the great and the good would eventuate.

The Stoic philosophy was also a multiculturalist moment in that it posited a cosmopolitan standard and looked toward a world community of peace and order. Unconsciously, its elitism and moralizing bear a family resemblance to the ideology of contemporary multiculturalism, which often has less to do with multicultural understanding than with promoting a highly specific message about the errors of American society and what to do about them.

This parallel can be drawn further. Contemporary multiculturalism claims to be universalist, but in fact promotes a particular agenda drawn from late-twentieth-century American elite opinion. Similarly, the Stoic thinker Aelius Aristides in the mid-second century clothed his cosmopolitanism in a paean to the Roman Empire, prophesying that the cosmopolitan culture to come would and should be Rome writ large: "in the end, all the world will be Rome," and all the world would live according to Stoic precepts, for they were the best.

The point here is not to ridicule Stoicism, but to show what appears to be a recurrent temptation of elite intellectuals in powerful societies. Marcus Aurelius, whose book of reflections became the most popular ancient book among American undergraduates in the 1990s, was a genuinely dutiful and self-sacrificing statesman, administrator, and commander. What never seems to have occurred either to him or to any other Stoic thinker whose works survive is the irony of rejecting ethnic and cultural boundaries in favor of a much more ruthless boundary between the right-minded and the ignorant, passionate, and unenlightened. The result was not a true philosophy of coexistence, but rather one of priggish self-righteousness.

Also, as the example of Aristides shows, Stoicism shared the tendency that Momigliano noted in Hellenistic philosophy of laying claim to curiosity about the world but then persistently interpreting the world in terms of its own hopes, values, and fears. For example, the sage and wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana, who, like Pythagoras, was supposed to have visited all the known world from the Atlantic Ocean to India, encapsulated his experiences by saying

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that "to the sage, everything is Greece." In another episode of Apollonius's life as recounted by the Stoic writer Philostratus, the "possessions" which he declared to the customs inspector at the frontier of the Parthian Empire included "wisdom, justice, virtue, self-control, courage, and *askesis* [spiritual exercises to tame the will and the emotions]." He was bringing Greek wisdom to the ends of the earth, rather than going forth to find the strange and learn from it. Pythagoras wanted to study with the Egyptian priests. Apollonius went to Egypt to instruct the Egyptians. But if Greece was everything and everywhere, it was also nothing in particular.

Thus, one of the strands of culture in later Hellenism led to an insipid dead end, in which cultural particularity disappeared into the Stoic world-city, which was itself but a pale projection of certain elite values. There were other strands, some of them recognizably descended from the bold common sense of Xenophanes. Bardaisan, for example, a third-century Christian and the court philosopher at the Syrian town of Edessa, "had set out to disprove the power of the stars and the doctrines of astrology by arguing from the diversity of national customs, which compel people to behave in ways that could not possibly be predicted from their stars."[27] Here, in a Hellenized Syrian, the spirit of Herodotus lived on. Bardaisan wrote *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, arguing that custom was indeed, as Pindar had said, the king of all things. Because of the weight of Hellenistic speculation, which by the third century had become heavily infused with fatalism, Bardaisan's line of argument was the opposite of Xenophanes'. The archaic Greek thinker noted that customs and beliefs differed and concluded that there were no supernatural sources of universal law, for if there were, customs would be observably similar. Bardaisan started from the common assumption of his time that supernatural forces, in this case the stars, determined human culture. Since culture in fact varied, those supernatural forces could not be as powerful as many people imagined. Bardaisan reverted to the classic Aristotelian idea that what shaped culture was nature or the environment, chance, and human decision and that, within those constraints, human decision was free.[28]

Bardaisan was not unique. His town of Edessa, which became part of the Roman Empire in his time and remained so until 364, was in the orbit of Beirut, the center of Roman law and law-making in the field of ancient international law, the "law of peoples." That Roman legal tradition may warrant a better claim to multiculturalism than Stoicism, for it was concerned not with personal improvement according to elite values, but with the customs and values that were common to various peoples, and could therefore form a common basis for orderly political relations. A fourth-century ethnographic work described Beirut as "the city that upholds all the legal learning of the Romans."[29]

[27] Quoted in Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 63.

[28] See Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 108–110. Bardaisan was, for example, well acquainted with Buddhism, which was prevalent in the Kushan Empire of eastern Iran and northern India.

[29] The *Expositio totius mundi*, quoted in Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, p. 64.

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Stoicism was a minority phenomenon. The same was long true of another doctrine that emerged from eastern Hellenism, namely, Christianity. This religion had its own multicultural origins in that it combined Jewish and Greek beliefs, including Stoicism. One of the earliest challenges for Christian theology was to prove that the new religion was in fact venerable and therefore worthy of being taken seriously. One answer was to maintain that Greek wisdom itself was derivative since it had been borrowed from the Jews. As Numenius of Apamea asked in the second century, what was Plato but an Attic Moses? Momigliano commented that "such a question underlined the most obvious historical consequence of the subordination of Greek thought to Oriental wisdom, that is, the change from the conquest of truth through reason to the acquisition of truth through revelation."[30]

This crucial shift in late Hellenism determined its cultural development, not just in regard to Christianity, but to other, more esoteric beliefs and cults. All of them shared the multicultural facade of much Hellenistic thought in that they claimed to be recoveries of the ancient wisdom of strange peoples, and all shared the Hellenistic tendency to find in the alien what their adherents desired, rather than what was truly different.

The philosopher and mystic Iamblichus, the head of the Neoplatonic school in Egypt, wrote ten books, the *Egyptian Mysteries*, arguing that the Egyptians were closer to the nature of things and thus to God. Their unchanging customs were superior to those of the Greeks, which were unreliable because they were constantly changing. As a response, Iamblichus promoted the so-called Hermetic writings, which offered initiation into esoteric and secret wisdom about the universe, fate, and immortality. The writings claimed to be derived from the Egyptian god Thoth, named Hermes in Greek, whose teaching was far older than that of Plato or any other Greek. In fact, they were typical products of late Hellenistic culture, written in Greek and for Greek speakers who longed to believe that they were in touch with ancient mysteries. Hermetism thus forms an appropriate coda to our treatment of ancient Mediterranean multiculturalism.[31] The Hermetic writings enjoyed considerable success in non-learned quarters during the later centuries of Hellenism and continued to be copied and read in the eastern Roman, or Byzantine Empire, which endured until 1453. At that time they were brought to Western Europe where they astonished Renaissance thinkers who were engaged in their own search for the wisdom of the ages beyond orthodox Christianity. In 1614, the Dutch Protestant scholar Isaac Casaubon demolished the myth of their authenticity in a famous article proving that they could not be products of genuine Egyptian wisdom and were not older than the Bible or Plato. Even so, the Hermetic writings continue to influence artists, poets, and mystics in the West.

[30] Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, p. 147.

[31] The social and cultural context of the Hermetic writings was thrillingly uncovered in Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, 2nd ed. with new preface (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), a work rich in insights on ancient multiculturalism.

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The Rise of a Persecuting Society?

The martyr Perpetua was shown a vision of the forces of evil in the shape of a black gladiator. While Christian theology and popular belief inherited from both Judaism and ancient paganism an idea of blackness as the color of sin and death, Christian teachers also took pains to subvert that popular imagery in order to emphasize human equality. Origen, a contemporary of Perpetua who later died after torture suffered during the Decian persecution of 249–251, wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs, the great love poem of the Old Testament in which the young bride says of herself, "I am black, but comely, o ye daughters of Jerusalem."[32] In traditional Christian exegesis, the bride of the Song of Songs is the church or, in some versions, the human soul, who eagerly awaits the incarnate bridegroom, who is Christ. Origen asked "in what way she is black and in what way fair without whiteness. She has repented of her sins; conversion has bestowed beauty upon her and she is sung as 'beautiful.' If you repent, your soul will be 'black' because of your former sins, but because of your penitence your soul will have something of what I may call an Ethiopian beauty."[33] Origen was a Christian, but as an educated ancient multiculturalist he shared an admiration for African beauty.

A hundred years after Perpetua was devoured by wild animals in the arena at Carthage, her faith triumphed in the Roman Empire. A hundred years after that, the emperors decided that Christianity must be the only legally permitted religion of the empire, and a long history of Western political affiliation with the Christian Church began. Some scholars, observing this development from within the modern notions of toleration and post-Enlightenment suspicion of clerical orthodoxy, have referred to the rise of the Christian empire, and after that to the rise of a Christian society in Europe, as the formation of "a persecuting society."

One area where scholars once perceived a distinct rise in intolerance was sexuality. A relaxed and bisexual pagan libertinism was supposed to have been quashed by repressed, tight-lipped puritans. This prurient Hollywood image of a lusty polytheism is no longer tenable. Christians certainly suspected and often feared sexuality. So did many others in the ancient world, none more than the Romans, whose "harsh distrust of sensual delight and a fear that the body's pleasures might weaken the resolve of the public man" survived in the sexual ethics of the Christian West.[34] So, in particular, did Stoicism, which along with Neoplatonism strongly influenced early Christian teaching. Hellenistic and Roman civilization was not, despite the lurid stories of Tacitus or Petronius, awash in carefree, polymorphous perversity. The *askesis* of an Apollonius of Tyana was more typical of elite values.

[32] Song of Songs 1:5, King James Version.

[33] Quoted in Frank Snowden, Jr., "Bernal's 'Blacks' and the Afrocentrists," p. 126.

[34] Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 426.

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Starting in the 1960s, scholarship has modified this image so far as the late Roman period is concerned. The imperial edicts against pagan worship were issued in a society in which official and even popular Christianity coexisted with a range of attitudes and behaviors. For example:

> In 630, three hundred prostitutes demonstrated against the Byzantine governor of Syracuse as he relaxed in the public baths. . . . The governor . . . pacified the protestors by appointing the Catholic bishop of Syracuse as imperial inspector of brothels. Good citizens of the Roman Empire in its last days, governor and bishop took for granted that their first duty was to preserve law and order in the city. In Syracuse, as elsewhere, the codes of behavior associated with the Catholic Church still had to coexist with a texture of urban life that had come of age long before Christianity.[35]

The post-Enlightenment, liberal interpretation of the Christianization of Western Europe as the "formation of a persecuting society" is simplistic and parochial. In a mirror image of earlier, pious historiography which portrayed early Christianity in the Roman Empire as constantly persecuted and harassed by a debauched and immoral pagan society, it uses episodes of anti-pagan oppression in the later empire to paint Christian rulers and priests as uniformly and obsessively intolerant. It is more informative to regard Christianization as a long-lasting and many-layered clash of civilizations, one that resulted in a Christian civilization of the West that ultimately produced a revival of the spirit of Xenophanes, Herodotus, and even Stoicism.

Undeniably, the Christian emperors wished to extirpate paganism and so proved themselves bad multiculturalists. But their actions sometimes had multicultural effects. In 529, the emperor Justinian closed the Academy in Athens founded by Plato nine hundred years earlier, an act condemned by all liberal historians as cultural vandalism. The professors emigrated to the Persian Empire, which they expected to be a land of serene wisdom, honesty, and virtue, in accordance with Herodotus's account. "They would have sung a different tune very quickly, when confronted by a harsher, more hierarchical, and less hellenized society than the one they expected to find," a modern historian wrote.[36] So what did they do? They returned to Roman territory and refounded a Neoplatonist school in the border town of Harran, under the joint guarantee of the Roman emperor and the Persian shah of shahs. The pagan academy of Harran survived, unbelievably, until the eleventh century, when it was closed for good, not by Christians, but by the puritanical Seljuk Turks.

The multicultural coexistence of Mediterranean natives with Germanic, Slavic, Persian, and Arab invaders, conquerors, and settlers takes the chronicle of multicultural relations beyond the limits of the ancient world. The rival monotheisms of Islam, Christian Byzantium, and the Christian West produced persecutions and intolerance, but also, and more interestingly, long periods of coexistence and consolidation in which the leading forces of the rival faiths

[35] Ibid., p. 431.

[36] Pierre Chuvin, *Chronicle of the Last Pagans*, trans. B. A. Archer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 138.

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sought less to establish imperial control than to create what historian Garth Fowden called diverse "commonwealths." His own work has focused on multicultural coexistence in the "Mountain Arc" stretching from the Caucasus through Mesopotamia and Iran to the periphery of the great Arabian desert. A similar "commonwealth" has long been seen by historians in the emerging civilization of medieval Western Europe, the civilization that ultimately gave rise to the state system, democracy, economic development, and political liberalism of the modern West.

Multiculturalism in antiquity was the polar opposite of today's angry ideology.

Multiculturalism in antiquity was, in important ways, the polar opposite of today's pinched and angry ideology. In trying to create a multicultural history of the ancient world, Martin Bernal succeeded merely in displaying modern prejudices. Greeks and Romans were, for all their diversity, members of traditional societies. More remarkable were the occasional moments when a few of them reached for and grasped the exhilarating idea that norms, values, and culture need not be treated as god-given, but could be examined, criticized, and understood by human reason. The multicultural moments of antiquity are these: the beginnings of anthropology in the archaic era, symbolized by Xenophanes, followed within a century and a half by the Athenian enlightenment and in particular by Herodotus; and, in later Hellenism, the Roman international law of the Beirut school and the doctrines of Stoicism. Roman international law resurfaced in the Middle Ages as the foundation for the modern law of nations and all later pragmatic attempts to limit war by neutralizing clashes of civilization. Stoicism, on the other hand, was a precious multiculturalism of closeted academics and offered no viable path for a culture that wanted to change and survive.

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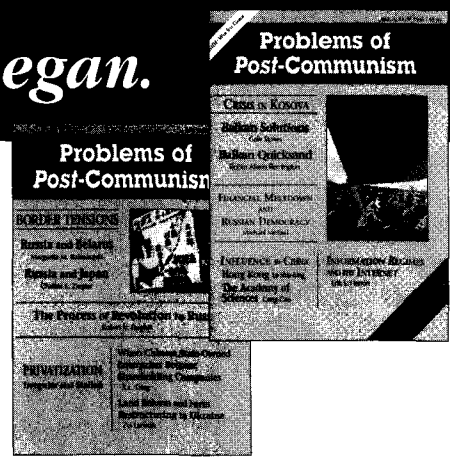

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Multiculturalism in History

India, the Multicultural Paradigm

by Stanley Wolpert

The roots of India's multiculturalism extend back over three thousand years to the first great invasions of South Asia by Indo-Aryan tribes whose priestly Brahman bards chanted mantras to their gods. Those Vedic Aryans, the easternmost wing of an Indo-European dispersion originating in the Caucasus, poured over the Khyber, Bolan, and other passes of the Hindu Kush mountains that now divide Afghanistan from Pakistan. Thanks to their multi-horsed chariots, well-wrought iron, and hafted axes, the rajas and their tough Aryan tribes conquered the far more sophisticated pre-Aryan urbanites, whose civilization had flourished for almost a thousand years in the Indus Valley. The pre-Aryan peoples were probably proto-Dravidian-speaking ancestors of southern India's modern Tamil-speaking Dravidas and may in turn have migrated to India from East Africa. From the archaeological remains of Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, and many other Indus Valley digs, we know how civilized they were, with modern sewage systems, hypocaust baths, steatite seals, burnt bricks, and glyptic art. They appear to have worshipped a phallic yogic fertility deity (the "Great God" of modern Hinduism, Shiva) and the Mother Goddess, whose fecundity and "power" (*shakti*) are required to animate every male Hindu deity.

Indian history's first multicultural synthesis was thus a blend of Aryan and pre-Aryan practices, institutions, and deities, which—given intermarriage and Aryan expansion across the eastern Gangetic plain and to the south—resulted in the emergence of that complex faith called Hinduism, with its pantheon of gods and goddesses, caste, outcaste, and class systems, and sacred Vedic, epic, and mythological literature. That great cultural synthesis was designed to be flexible enough through its caste system to incorporate the greatest range of diverse peoples under the protection of Hinduism's white umbrella, but various pre-Aryan princes or priests who refused to accept their conquerors' syncretism broke away and started their own faiths. Buddhism and Jainism were the greatest of those heterodox rejections of Brahmanic dogma, but before the end of the classical age of Guptan imperial unification, both doctrines were reclaimed by

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Hinduism. The Buddha was worshipped as an *avatara* ("earthly emanation") of the Hindu solar god Vishnu, and Jainism was considered but a "sect" of Hinduism.

In 326 B.C. Alexander the Great, with his dream of universal conquest, crossed the Indus with a mighty Macedonian army that conquered each of the petty kingdoms of Punjab. The Hellenic tide ebbed quickly, but inspired the first indigenous emperor, Chandragupta Maurya, to unify all of northern India in the wake of Alexander's sudden withdrawal. Hellenistic influences continued to be reflected in Gandhara's later Buddhist art and the Bactrian Greek coins found all over the region, but otherwise Alexander's impact on Indic civilization proved slight. The third Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, converted to Buddhism and left a noble legacy in his dream of nonviolent imperial rule and administration through laws and love—but only after his terribly bloody conquest of the kingdom of Kalinga (modern Orissa). This Mauryan unity lasted 140 years until India was again invaded from the northwest, first by Greco-Bactrians, then by Scythians, Pahlavas, and Central Asian Kushanas, each of whom added fresh genes and weaponry to Indic civilization. None of them brought enduring change, however, because India's ocean of cultures, though always alluring to barbarians who heard tell of it, usually managed to seduce and conquer its conquerors with its wealth, warmth, and ancient wisdom.

India's ocean of cultures attracted many conquerors—and conquered almost all of them.

The great exception to that rule, of course, were the Muslims, who first invaded India in 711 A.D., and in 1526, at the dawn of the great Mughal Empire, launched the last campaign in their conquest of South Asia. Their modern legacy may be seen not only in the Islamic states of Pakistan and Bangladesh, but also in the more than 100 million Muslims who dwell to this day within India. For Islam, like Hinduism, is a comprehensive way of life, one which unites its followers within a universal "community" (*umma*) of brothers who worship the one God, Allah, a portion of whose divine book is preserved in Arabic in the Quran, which was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. Islam's monotheism and social-democratic ideals contrast sharply with Hinduism's many gods and a caste system based on inequality and isolation. Doctrinal differences often led to violent conflicts, which spread and continue to plague India and indeed all of South Asia today. For instance, Hinduism's worship of the cow, which Muslims not only eat, but also sacrifice, ignited communal conflicts in countless cities of India, while the Hindu temples, with their statues of sensuous gods and goddesses, were viewed as blasphemous by iconoclastic Muslim eyes. That said, coexistence was more often the norm during the centuries of Hindu-Muslim cohabitation in South Asia. Most villages were in fact atoms of multicultural harmony during the era of Muslim rule and continue to be so in many states of modern India. The great world faith of Sikhism, started by Guru Nanak in the Punjab in the sixteenth century, may be viewed as the most important syncretism of Hinduism and Islam, although devout Sikhs insist on its uniquely inspired origins. Indian Muslim historians insist, moreover, that nefarious British imperial policies of divide and rule alone brought Pakistan to life and that

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communal conflicts in India were generated by economic exploitation or struggles over jobs, housing, and food, rather than by religious animosity. Obviously, economic pressures can always exacerbate conflict, especially in a crowded multicultural setting wherein resources are scarce. But it is a simplistic and doctrinaire misreading of Indian history to attribute the bloody division of India and the birth of Pakistan to Perfidious Albion alone. Pakistan's "Great Leader" (*Quaid-i-Azam*), M.A. Jinnah, was educated in London to be a barrister—yet so were India's "Great Soul" (*Mahatma*), M.K. Gandhi, and her first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. It was only after Jinnah himself shared a deep sense of injustice at the discrimination practiced by India's Hindu majority and its political leaders against Muslims that he led his Muslim League and its followers in their demand for, and attainment of, a separate "Land of the Pure"—Pakistan—for British India's Muslims.

Pakistan was born in mid-August 1947, a day before India attained her independence after more than a century of domination by Britain. The British Raj had fallen heir to some three centuries of patient West European colonial penetration, first along southern India's Malabar coast (modern Kerala) by the Portuguese, later around the Bay of Bengal by Dutch, French, and English East India Company merchants, who quickly abandoned their quiet trade in favor of piracy and plunder. While once great Mughal emperors and courtiers fought among themselves over Delhi and Agra, Afghan Amirs from the northwest and Hindu Maratha Peshwas from the south destroyed one another's huge armies in futile attempts throughout most of the eighteenth century to grab all the jeweled thrones and priceless territorial pieces of Mughal imperial power. By that century's end, British plunderers led by Robert Clive easily grabbed rich Bengal, and shrewd "John Company" managers such as Warren Hastings transformed Calcutta's city of "dreadful night" (as Rudyard Kipling called it) into the capital of what was soon to be the brightest jewel in Great Britain's imperial crown.

Britain's cultural legacy to India, topped by Elizabethan, Victorian, and Edwardian English with its corpus of great literature (much of which is better understood and appreciated by Indians than Americans), also includes cricket, high tea, and such exotic concepts as freedom, democracy, responsible parliamentary government, gender equality, and secular statehood. Various British radicals, liberals, missionaries, secular educators, idealists, and humanitarians supported the Indian National Congress, India's foremost nationalist organization, which was founded in 1885 and drawn upon by Nehru after 1947 to staff India's new central government. The Congress Party dynasty continued to rule for most of India's first four decades of freedom, and even today the Italian-born widow of Nehru's assassinated grandson aspires to rule under the corruption-stained Congress banner, although hers is a most implausible bid.

With almost one billion people and at least fourteen major languages, India's republic is more nearly a continent than a country, much less a nation as Europeans understand it. The British Crown's Raj, which assumed the burdens of rule from the hapless East India Company following the so-called Sepoy Mutiny, or Great War of 1857–58, helped India to fashion many of its illusions

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of unity. The British linked the subcontinent's extremities with railroads and communications systems, raised, trained, and equipped Asia's most powerful army, established its most efficient civil service, and built its grandest new capital at New Delhi. These illusions of imperial permanence fast crumbled in the face of India's nationalist storms, whose many *satyagraha* (noncooperation) movements, led by Gandhi and his followers, helped to weaken Britain's will to retain her faded crown jewel. After World War II, with the fall of Winston Churchill's government in 1945 and Labour's electoral victory, Prime Minister Clement Attlee decided that India was more of a liability than an asset. But inasmuch as the Indians themselves could not agree on who should assume the leadership of a post-colonial state, the British opted for partition, leaving most of the subcontinent to Nehru's Congress and the rest—West and East Pakistan—to Jinnah's Muslim League.

Partition proved no solution to the multicultural problem, but instead was an admission of failure that provoked voluntary and involuntary "ethnic cleansing" on a gargantuan scale. Millions of desperate Hindus and Sikhs took to the roads in an attempt to cross from Pakistan to India, and an almost equal number of Indian Muslims fled towards Pakistan. Perhaps a million of those refugees perished; the rest found shelter only in crowded camps that became their inadequate homes for decades. Nor did the two new nations ever agree on the division of spoils, and they have continued to argue and fight over disputed boundaries, waters, financial assets, and other goods. The worst conflict, which erupted into the first Indo-Pakistani War only a few months after independence, involved sovereignty over the former princely state of Kashmir, most of whose people are Muslim. Pakistan argued that, according to the formula for partition, Kashmir belonged to its dominion, while India insisted on "protecting" Kashmir from invading tribes and later claimed it as an "integral" part of India's union. Nehru adamantly refused to permit a U.N.-directed plebiscite, even though he initially indicated support for it. A second Indo-Pakistani War was fought over Kashmir in 1965, and if a third should occur someday it could conceivably be fought with nuclear weapons.

Resurgent Hindu fundamentalism in the past quarter-century has also revived internal communal conflicts in India, the most tragic of which was the destruction of the ancient Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya by a mob of frenzied Hindu zealots. Erected over four centuries ago to commemorate Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, the holy site was battered to rubble in just nine hours in December 1992. Hindus had been told that it stood over the birthplace of Raja Rama, a mythical epic king of Ayodhya worshipped as an *avatara* of Vishnu. Retaliatory riots in Bombay, Pakistan, and Bangladesh led to the deaths of hundreds of innocents and the destruction of many Hindu temples. In northeastern India, where many Naga, Mizo, and other tribal peoples have lately converted to Christianity and struggled for greater autonomy from remote New Delhi's rule, several divisions of the Indian army have been tied down for decades, trying to maintain what passes for order. Some half a million regular troops are kept busy in Jammu and Kashmir as well, although their entire local population is less than ten million. In Tamil Nadu, southern India's

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largest state, "Dravidistan" separatists tried for decades to break away from New Delhi's "Imperial Raj" (as they called it), and in Punjab, militant Sikhs have long demanded their own "Sikhistan," more recently called "Khalistan."

During the past decade, India's new economic liberalization and globalization have so richly enhanced the lifestyles of the top third of India's population that they now enjoy all the pleasures and pains of modern industrial and multicultural society. Wealthy urban dwellers own televisions, personal computers, and expensive cars, but are daily confronted with violence and road accidents and are more vulnerable to illnesses attributed to high cholesterol, stress, and ulcers. For the still-impoverished remainder of the population, life remains precarious and arduous. The status of Untouchable, despite being outlawed by the republic's constitution since 1950, is still acknowledged by more than 150 million people eager for privileges under affirmative action. Ex-Untouchables demonstrate a growing political influence at every election, but have been violently attacked of late by high-caste Hindus and their bodyguards whenever they have tried to drink from high-caste village wells or marry high-caste Hindus. Rural caste-outcaste murders and vendettas have recently become daily occurrences in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, despite the fact that one ex-Untouchable is now India's president and several others have served as the chief minister of India's largest state.

Indian civilization, therefore, presents us with examples of both a rich and relatively pacific multicultural heritage, and a tragic and violent present that cannot simply be blamed on British imperialism. What is the solution, if one exists? Education, to be sure, is the best means of overcoming multicultural conflicts, but for India that task is compounded by the plethora of exotic languages and faiths which must be taught alongside traditional subjects in India's struggling school systems. And at the lowest and most impoverished levels, where their impact could be the greatest, both funding and dedicated multicultural teachers are in short supply. Hence, the Indian subcontinent, instead of being a model of peaceful coexistence, continues to suffer from intractable ethnic conflicts that have the potential to undermine the stability not only of South Asia, but the entire post–Cold War world.

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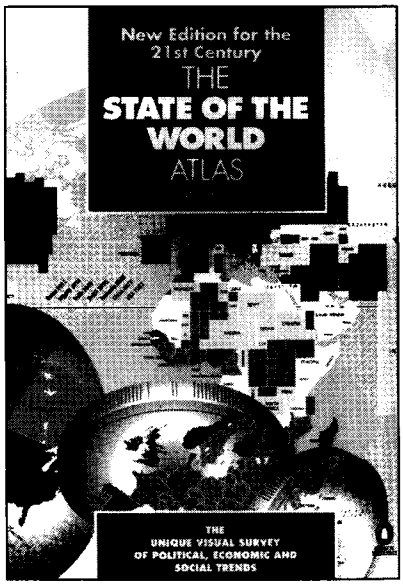

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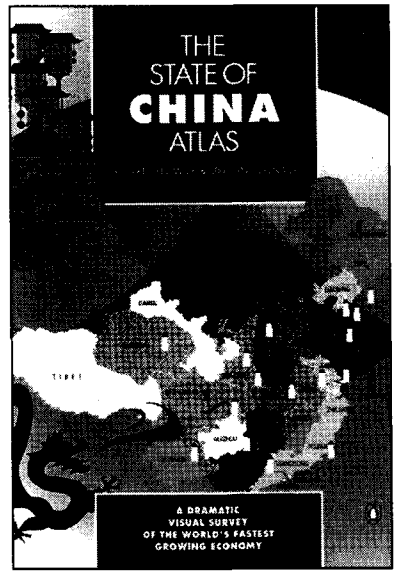

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Multiculturalism in History

China, the Monocultural Paradigm

by June Teufel Dreyer

Chinese traditionally regarded their land as the "Middle Kingdom," not in the sense that it happened to lie in the midst of other, more or less equal political entities, but rather that it was literally the center of the earth under heaven.[1] To the Han Chinese, all other peoples—the non-Chinese people—were barbarians, and their cultures were held in low regard.

This attitude, however, did not completely prevent China from borrowing from these "inferior" peoples. For example, the idea of fighting from horseback, as opposed to the early Han practice of using horse-drawn chariots, seems to have come from China's nomadic neighbors to the north. At a somewhat later date, the stirrup was adopted from Turkic invaders. This device allowed mounted warriors to shoot backwards, thereby enhancing their survivability. Both of these are military innovations whose value could be clearly demonstrated in combat. Yet even in the military field, where the nomads displayed obvious superiority, borrowing was rare.

There was a brief period in which several different philosophies contended for cultural primacy in China, but this was a debate *within* Chinese civilization, and occurred very early in Chinese history—from approximately 500 to 300 B.C. Known as the "Hundred Schools" period, it was characterized by vigorous debates on such matters as the relationship between the ruler and his subjects, and whether laws should apply equally or differentially depending on one's status in the community in relation to the perpetrator of a perceived injustice.

After a fairly short period, Confucianism won out and became accepted as the state philosophy. It is believed that Confucius (the romanized form of his name, Master Kong) wove together various pre-existing elements into his formulation. Hence, some have argued that Confucius should be regarded as

[1] The author wishes to thank Professor Edward L. Dreyer, Department of History, University of Miami, for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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a collator or synthesizer rather than an original thinker. For example, the concepts of the family as the basic societal unit and of one's obligation to pay homage to one's ancestors appear to have long predated the birth of Master Kong.

Confucius wanted to devise a theory of statecraft and considered the kingdom, later the empire, as a family writ large: a series of progressively larger familial organizations. At its pinnacle was the emperor, regarded as the father of his people. The emperor's officials were actually referred to as fathers and mothers of the people.[2] At the lowest level of the hierarchy, the household, families kept elaborate genealogical records, displayed ancestral tablets on an altar-like table in a special place in the home, and burned incense before them as a sign of reverence.

Confucian philosophy advocated the rule of the sage: wise officials guiding the simple folk below them by the power of righteous example. The common people—peasants—were next in importance in Confucius's class system, followed by the artisans and, at the bottom of this four-class system, those who engaged in business. Confucius did not approve of merchants, believing that they bought the products of honest labor cheaply and sold them at higher prices. Since he did not credit entrepreneurship as a useful pursuit, it followed that those who engaged in business contributed nothing to society to justify their financial gains. The military was conspicuously absent from the Confucian class system; a popular saying was "as one does not use good iron to make a nail, one does not use good men as soldiers."[3] Confucius, again probably echoing pre-existing attitudes, was contemptuous of other cultures, as exemplified by his statement, "I have heard of barbarians being transformed by Chinese. I have never heard of Chinese being transformed by barbarians."

In the process of eclipsing the other schools of philosophy, Confucianism absorbed certain elements from them (for example, the symbolism of *yin* and *yang*), as well as certain practices from Daoism. Since Confucius's concern was with the world—the construction of the well-ordered state—rather than the afterlife, certain religions could coexist with Confucianism. Buddhism was one such faith. Although imported, it was quickly sinicized, and also faded from prominence in its native India. Moreover, because Buddhism existed in a variety of sects, there was no single head or center of authority that might challenge the primacy of the state or emperor. In general, therefore, it was tolerated.

Islam, by contrast, was much more dangerous because it contained basic and irresolvable conflicts with Chinese culture. The fundamental reason was that a Muslim's first loyalty was to Allah—not to the emperor. Also of concern was (and is) that the center of Islam was in Mecca rather than within China. Though the Islamic faith certainly encouraged respect for elders, it did not countenance the keeping of Confucian tablets. Islam was also a proselytizing and outward-looking faith, attitudes antithetical to Confucianism. Muslims could

[2] They were all male; the Chinese term is *fumu guan*, or "father-mother officials."

[3] In Japan, which is often referred to as a Confucian society, the warrior class supplanted the official class at the top of society.

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and did serve as imperial officials, but only by observing their rituals, such as daily prayers and bathing, privately, and they generally served at lower levels of government. As will be seen later, Christianity, particularly Catholicism, was also not well tolerated for similar reasons.

Cultural Issues in Imperial China

Different dynasties varied somewhat in their tolerance of other cultures. The Tang (618–907 A.D.) is regarded as the most cosmopolitan of the Han Chinese dynasties. During this era synagogues were built in China and Muslim traders visited the empire. A Sogdian, An Lu-shan, even became the military commander and a favorite at the Tang court. What accounts for this greater tolerance is a matter of some speculation. It is true that the ruling family of the Tang, the Li, had Turkic blood. But the Tang tolerance was not an entirely happy experience. An Lu-shan became amorously involved with the emperor's most cherished concubine, and then led a rebellion against him. The uprising was eventually put down, and the caliph of Islam even sent an army to help the emperor, but the war left the Tang fatally weakened.

The next dynasty, the Song (mid-tenth through mid-thirteenth centuries), was not nearly so tolerant. It was characterized by the rise of neo-Confucianism, many of whose basic attitudes had originated under the Tang as a reaction to the greater tolerance. The Tang statesman and author Han Yü, a forerunner of neo-Confucianism, gained fame when he wrote a memorial to the emperor attacking plans to build a temple for a reliquary said to be a tooth of the Buddha. This developed into a broad movement against foreign influences, as well as a general attack on a literary culture that rivaled orthodox Confucian style.[4] The latter developed into the *guwen* (ancient text) style that became the literary form of neo-Confucian writing.

The Song was succeeded by the Yuan (1260–1368), the dynastic name adopted by the Mongol conquerors of China. The Mongols inspired terror by riding in large formations known as *ordos* (hordes) and killing indiscriminately. Paradoxically, however, their dynasty was quite tolerant of other cultures, perhaps because they conquered so many peoples in so short a time.[5] Mongol rule has been characterized as being dispensed from horseback:[6] the Yuan had

[4] During the so-called Six Dynasties period, approximately 222–589 A.D., a literary style known as *qingtan* (pure conversation) developed. Influenced by Daoism, it was characterized by irony, allusions, and what was called "parallel prose." Because *qingtan* aimed at writing for literary effect rather than moral instruction, there were objections from prominent people at the time, such as the legendary Cao Cao (Ts'ao Ts'ao). All were disparaged by practitioners of *qingtan*. Their rehabilitation was one of Han Yü's goals.

[5] Mongol hordes were actually at the gates of Vienna when they were informed that the great khan had died. Tradition dictated that they return to their homeland for a *khuriltai*, or conclave, to select the next khan.

[6] This is somewhat of an oversimplification. However, it is true that Mongol leaders who seemed to be adopting some of the trappings of Chinese civilization were regarded with contempt by those who remained true to their nomadic traditions.

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no desire either to make others adopt Mongol culture or, until late in the dynasty, to make themselves into Confucians.

During the earliest years of the Ming (1368–1644), there was considerable interest in things foreign, though more, it would appear, as curiosities than because of any systemic interest in the cultures they represented. Moreover, this interest was confined to a small group of court eunuchs—led by a Muslim—which spearheaded the great Chinese sea voyages of the fourteenth century. The emperor's ships brought back exotic animals including ostriches, zebras, and giraffes, to the delight of many members of court and the disgust of Confucian scholar-officials. Confucian officials argued that the voyages were extremely expensive as well as unnecessary and inconsistent with Confucian values. Although the truth of these objections is undeniable, it has been argued that the real reason the scholars opposed the voyages was because they enhanced the power and prestige of the eunuchs vis-à-vis the scholar-officials. Since eunuchs were by definition the last of their ancestral line, they were looked down upon by Confucians, and their existence within the imperial palace was only tolerated because of the acknowledged necessity to ensure that the emperor's sons were in fact truly his sons. But the officials steadfastly resisted any attempt by the eunuchs to accrue power and prestige within the government. Over time, scholars' arguments convinced emperors of the wisdom of concentrating on internal ethical cultivation rather than seeking far-flung exotica, and the sea voyages were halted. Thereafter, the empire practiced, in the words of one scholar, "self-sufficiency, smug self-satisfaction, and splendid isolation."[7]

Ming Confucianists were, like their predecessors, uninterested in the diverse cultures within the Chinese empire. While regarding these cultures as beneath notice, there was no desire to convert the barbarians to Confucian culture. The general attitude was that those who were capable of absorbing Confucian culture would recognize its superiority without pressure or instruction and seek to structure their lives in accordance with its precepts. As for the rest, they were to be supervised to some degree to keep them from causing problems for the empire, but not converted. In the words of the noted Ming philosopher-statesman Wang Yang-ming:

> Barbarians are like wild deer. To institute direct civil service administration by Han Chinese magistrates would be like herding deer into the hall of a house and trying to tame them. In the end, they merely butt over your sacrificial altars, kick over your tables, and dash about in frantic flight. . . . In the wilderness districts, therefore, one should adapt one's methods to the character of the wilderness. On the other hand, to leave these tribal chiefs to themselves to conduct their own alliances or split up their domains is like releasing deer into the wilderness. . . . To fragment their domains under separate chiefs is to follow the policy of gelding the stallion and castrating the boar. . . . To set up independent chiefs without supervisory aides is like herding deer into enclosed gardens . . . they will leap the fences, bite through the bamboo screens, and wander

[7] See Ishwer Ojha, *Chinese Foreign Policy in an Age of Transition: The Diplomacy of Cultural Despair* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 3.

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far to trample young crops. The presently established civil service aides are such guardians of the parks and fences.[8]

In the mid-seventeenth century, the Ming dynasty fell to another group of Central Asian nomads, the Manchus, who founded the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Unlike the Mongols, however, the Manchus did not try to rule from horseback. Their modus operandi was characterized by two quite different styles of rule and involved a very conscious manipulation of symbols. The Qing is more accurately conceptualized as an empire that included China rather than as a Chinese empire. To assert their rule over Mongolia and Manchuria, the Qing employed Central Asian rituals. For example, when the Mongol khans visited Rehe (Jehol), the Qing summer capital, they were received in accordance with Mongolian customs, such as the khans' walking between two fires to symbolize purification. The Qing emperor was also the patron of Tibetan Buddhism and maintained close ties with the Dalai Lama. (Lamaist Buddhism was the religion of the Mongols as well as the Tibetans.) Toward their Han territories, the Qing ruled through Confucian symbols and rituals and, as time passed, the dynasty became more sinified. Though some Manchu customs were retained, later emperors practiced calligraphy, wrote classical poetry, and observed Confucian etiquette. All carried out the Confucian rites, including yearly ceremonies to the temples of heaven and earth, respectively.[9]

Just how Confucian the Qing could be is exemplified by its reaction to Christianity. Jesuit priests arrived in China in the seventeenth century and soon established themselves at court. This seems to have been part of a "top-down" conversion strategy, which must have seemed logical given the hierarchical nature of Confucian society. Possessing both breadth and depth of technological and linguistic talents, the Jesuits gained favor at court. They taught the Chinese how to cast better cannons and how to improve their already very good astronomical observations, and introduced the emperor to quinine to treat his malaria. The Jesuits also adapted Christianity to Confucian culture. The fourth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother all the days of thy life," for example, was especially compatible with Confucian tradition.

Although progress in winning souls was not rapid, the Jesuits managed to convert several individuals who were well respected within Chinese society. Everything seemed to be going relatively well until the appearance of a rival order, the Franciscans. Consonant with the tradition of their founder, St. Francis, the new arrivals focused their ministry on the common folk. They also accused the Jesuits of distorting the precepts of the faith in an effort to harmonize it with Confucianism. Friction between the two orders culminated in 1693 in the so-called Rites Controversy, an argument about how to translate the word "God"

[8] Quoted by Herold Wiens, *China's March to the Tropics* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoestring Press, 1954), p. 219.

[9] For example, the emperor symbolically began the spring planting season at the Temple of Earth each year by turning over soil with a silver shovel. This purely Confucian ritual reflected the sedentary agricultural traditions of the Han.

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into Chinese. The Jesuits opted for *shangdi* (literally, "supreme ruler"), while the Franciscans preferred *tianzhu* ("lord of heaven"). The Qing emperor decided that he preferred *shangdi*, whereupon the disappointed Franciscans referred the matter to the pope, who subsequently ruled in favor of *tianzhu*. When apprised of this, the emperor was so appalled at the effrontery of someone who arrogantly assumed that his opinions could challenge those of the emperor that he expelled all Christian missionaries from China.

In the eighteenth century other Westerners came to China, unwittingly again challenging the primacy of Confucian culture. These merchants were less interested in souls than profits, but commercialism, too, ran counter to Confucianism. While the Westerners had the idea that they would exchange their commodities of value for Chinese commodities of value, the court did not see the exchange as equal: Westerners were just barbarians, albeit different looking than the barbarians they had encountered before, and their products had no value except as curiosities.

The new barbarians, moreover, were extraordinarily resistant to accepting the superiority of Confucian culture and violated its notions of civilized behavior with horrifying regularity. Lord Macartney, for example, was sent to the Chinese court in 1793, exactly a century after the Rites Controversy broke out. He refused to perform the ritual *ketou* (kowtow; the "three kneelings and nine prostrations" of obeisance required to approach the imperial throne), explaining that he would bow only to his own sovereign. The Chinese, of course, did not know of, and could not accept, the concept of sovereignty, based as it is on an assumption that all nations are equal. After protracted and frustrating negotiations, Macartney was sent off with a letter to the British monarch explaining that, since the celestial empire had everything worth having within its borders, it required nothing from "your little kingdom." Nonetheless, his imperial majesty, realizing that the British had need of certain items, graciously decided to give them as gifts.[10]

Barbarians who accepted the superiority of Confucian civilization were, by contrast, accepted in spite of their strange appearance. Frederick Townsend Ward, an American soldier who went to China to help the emperor put down a rebellion, later petitioned to be made a Chinese citizen. Citizenship was a concept which, like sovereignty, was unknown to court officials. After much discussion of this curious request, and taking into consideration that Ward had learned to speak Chinese, dressed as a Chinese, and observed Confucian etiquette, they agreed to enter his name on the Chinese population register. What this seems to indicate is the existence of a culturally based society—resting on the internalization of Confucian precepts—rather than the ethnically based nationalism of the West.

Ward, however, was exceptional. Most foreigners were unwilling to accept Confucian culture and were inclined to belligerence when their demands

[10] Alain Peyrefitte, *The Immobile Empire* (New York: Knopf, 1992) contains a detailed account of these negotiations.

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for trade and other concessions met resistance. In the end, the foreigners had to fight their way into China. In a series of engagements that began with the Opium War of 1839, they easily bested the militarily unprepared Qing forces. Not surprisingly, this caused a crisis of confidence in the heretofore culturally self-confident empire. When officials finally realized how serious a military threat the West presented, their first reaction was that China was losing because it had strayed from Confucianism. The solution, therefore, was not to adapt or to incorporate the foreigners' culture, but to recapture the pure essence of Confucian culture.[11]

The Demise of Confucian Culture

The possibility that this might not work did occur to some people. One such individual was Woren, the head of the Hanlin Academy, which represented the pinnacle of Confucian scholarship. Faced with a choice of either saving the empire by sacrificing Confucian principles or saving Confucian principles by sacrificing the empire, Woren (who was himself a Mongol) argued for the latter. Confucius himself might have disagreed. His teachings, it can be argued, are not couched in the imperative "we must," but as a guide: "how could any reasonable person do otherwise?"[12]

As time passed and defeats accrued, more voices began to call for adaptation. Their compromise was to retain Confucian culture as the essence (*ti*) of Chinese civilization while sanctioning parts of Western learning for practical use (*yong*). The *ti/yong* distinction was less intellectually threatening than sacrificing either the empire or Confucianism, although operationalizing the formula gave rise to problems. There was no clear guide to what was *ti* and what was *yong*, and many arguments arose about where the line should be drawn and what actions might prove the "slippery slope" of no return. For example, establishing factories to produce better armaments meant training people in physics, chemistry, metallurgy, and economics. All of these were "Western learning." The factory system itself created a demand for a mobile labor force. This, in turn, would draw people away from the ancestral villages and their obligation to tend to the ancestral tablets and ritually sweep the ancestral graves.

It was a naval shipyard engineer and translator, Yan Fu, who came to the same unpleasant conclusion that Woren had foreseen: Western culture had an essence of its own, and the practical items it produced were manifestations of this essence, hence Western *yong* could not be adopted without Western *ti*. But whereas Woren had argued that categorical resistance to Western culture

[11] The debates of this period are summarized in Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey 1839–1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954). See also Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1957).

[12] Joseph Levenson, *Modern China and Its Confucian Past* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1964), p. 144.

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was needed to save Confucian culture, Yan advocated adopting Western culture in order to save China. And the essence of Western culture, he believed, was freedom. By promoting the constructive self-interest of the individual, the state could release individual energies to be applied to collective goals. As will be seen, these arguments resonate in present-day Chinese debates on "socialism with Chinese characteristics."[13]

At the time the *ti/yong* debate raged, Sun Yat-sen was formulating his own synthesis. Born in China but educated at an exclusive preparatory school in Hawaii and holder of a Western medical degree, Sun had converted to Christianity. He explicitly linked his ideology of the Three Principles of the People to Abraham Lincoln's government by the people, of the people, and for the people.

Did modernization necessarily mean Westernization?

Predictably, Sun was looked down upon by scholar-officials because of his ignorance of Confucianism. They preferred to reform the existing system, whereas Sun felt it had to be destroyed. Neither Sun nor the reformers, however, envisioned anything like multiculturalism. Their quest was for a culture that could revive China's past glories and repel foreign domination. As such, it became inextricably intertwined with the different but related concept of modernization. Did modernization necessarily mean Westernization, or were there different, culturally conditioned paths to the same end? How fundamental would the changes in Confucianism have to be?

Sun's formulation was ultimately victorious. Among other innovations, it replaced culturally based nationalism with ethnically based nationalism. In point of fact, the Manchu dynasty could not validly be criticized on cultural grounds, since it had so well incorporated Confucianism. But Sun's explanation for why China was poor and weak was that it was ruled by Manchus rather than Han. While consciously trying to adapt Western culture to the Chinese context, Sun and his political party, the Kuomintang (KMT), were nonetheless intolerant of China's own ethnic minority cultures. The KMT's first flag was composed of five stripes, symbolizing the country's major ethnic groups. Since the party's policies were, however, unabashedly assimilationist, a flag with many stripes blending into one color would have more accurately symbolized its aspirations. This attitude was scarcely unique to the KMT: it characterized behavior in much of the West as well as Japan at the time. Ironically, the present-day KMT, currently the ruling party of the Republic of China on Taiwan, has, in sharp contrast to the communist government on the Chinese mainland, enthusiastically embraced multiculturalism.[14]

The 1911 revolution removed the Qing from power and began the republican era. While Confucian ideals remained strong, particularly in the countryside, the end of the dynasty made it difficult to retain even a modified

[13] Benjamin I. Schwartz, *In Search Of Wealth and Power: Yan Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

[14] See, for example, Oscar Chung, "Neither Yam Nor Taro," *Free China Review*, February 1999, pp. 6–13; Christopher Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 70–128.

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Confucianism as a governing system. The difficulty was that there was no consensually agreed upon ideology to replace Confucianism. Multiculturalism may be said to have existed, not as a conscious choice or preference, but *faute de mieux*. Different cultures contended amidst considerable confusion, uncertainty, and a plethora of different rulers.

The so-called May 4th generation—its name derives from a mass demonstration on that date in 1919 which forced the resignation of the government—stridently rejected Confucianism, but was deeply divided as to what ideology to substitute. Anarchists, Fabian socialists, liberal democrats, and communists argued while warlords governed. As with the Hundred Schools period, this was a debate within the culture over what single ideology was best suited for China. How to regain the country's past greatness was the paramount consideration; the strong impression is that most (but not all) participants in this debate were little interested in toleration of other points of view, nor did they envision a multicultural society.

Sun Yat-sen's successor, Chiang Kai-shek, unified China, at least in name, in 1928.[15] He tried to blend Confucianism with republicanism,[16] though the Japanese invasion makes it impossible to determine how successful these efforts might have been. The invasion also destabilized the KMT's already fragile governing structure. In 1949, Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP) drove the KMT off the mainland and proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Marxism-Leninism and Its Chinese Variant

Mao was, of course, aware that the new governing ideology he was imposing on China had come from the West. Yet Marxism purported to be scientific: the culmination of immutable laws of history, and culturally neutral. The CCP leaders either genuinely did see Marxism as such or found it convenient to state that they did. But Mao realized that even a theory that purported to

[15] Chiang's Northern Expedition of 1927–29 marched from his party's southern base and captured Beijing. At this point the KMT became recognized as the legitimate government of China. However, Chiang made a number of compromises—for example, independent warlords became the KMT governors of the provinces they had ruled—which limited the loyalty he could expect from them.

[16] This was an interesting transformation, since the earlier KMT, tutored by Soviet advisers, was regarded as somewhat left wing. In 1927, just before the Northern Expedition brought the KMT to power, party propaganda described Confucius as despotic and accused his teachings of oppressing the people and enslaving their thoughts. Straw effigies of Confucius were burned in the streets. In 1928, Chiang ordered his military officers to study the Confucian classics in their spare time. Confucius's birthday became a national holiday and governmental protection was accorded to Confucian temples. In 1934, Chiang announced a New Life Movement, meant to modernize Confucianism. Among other innovations, ninety-six rules were adduced to operationalize the four rather abstract Confucian virtues of the rites, righteousness, integrity, and sense of shame. These include admonitions against spitting, eating noisily, smoking, and bad posture. The strong inference is that Chiang considered the ideology of his own government sufficiently inadequate that he attempted to bolster it with elements of Confucianism.

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be culturally neutral must come to terms with the culture in which it operated. More than a decade before the party came to power, he stated:

> A communist is a Marxist internationalist, but Marxism must take on a national form before it can be applied. There is no such thing as abstract Marxism, but only concrete Marxism. What we call concrete Marxism is Marxism that has taken on a national form, that is, Marxism applied to the concrete struggle in the concrete conditions prevailing in China and not Marxism absolutely used.

As a corollary, Mao emphasized that it was necessary to "make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China."[17]

Nonetheless, this purportedly culturally neutral foreign import bore a strong stamp of Soviet influence during its early years in China. Soviet advisers assisted their Chinese counterparts, hotels and factories were built in Soviet style, children's books were translated from Russian. For Han China, Marxism became the only culture: it would countenance no rivals. In order to unify the country behind the new government and strengthen it against outside enemies, there was a major effort at standardization. The pronunciation of the Chinese language was declared to be Mandarin, with all citizens required to learn and speak it in preference to regional dialects. A standard list of Chinese characters was issued; magazines and newspapers were required to use only those characters. Radio broadcasts beamed the same message from Beijing to all parts of the country, to workers in their factories and peasants in their fields, and it could not be turned off.

Apart from limited contact with the Soviet Union and a few other eastern bloc countries, the atmosphere in the early years of the PRC bordered on xenophobic. "Fraternal socialist states" excepted, pernicious external influences were vigilantly guarded against. There was a brief period in 1956 when Mao called for "a hundred schools of thought to contend and a hundred flowers to bloom." This was a conscious reference to the 500–300 B.C. period, although Mao had a different goal: socialism could be criticized in order to improve it. But when some citizens became bold in their criticisms, the flowers of their opinion were reclassified as "poisonous weeds in the garden of socialism," and would have to be exterminated. This was followed by the harshly repressive anti-rightist campaign of 1957.

China's own ethnic minorities were treated with relative tolerance in the early years of the communist regime, but this reflected more than an acceptance of multiculturalism. The leadership was aware that it knew comparatively little about most of its minorities and could therefore easily antagonize them unintentionally. Since the majority of these groups lived in the country's border areas, the possibility that they might collaborate with the PRC's foreign enemies was worrisome.

[17] Mao Zedong, "On the New Stage," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1966), pp. 195–211.

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There were also ideological reasons for tolerance: communism held that cultural differences would disappear after the revolution. Marx had argued that what appeared to be ethnic, cultural, and nationality distinctions were in fact manifestations of the stage of society. These distinctions were encouraged by the ruling classes of bourgeois capitalist states in order to conceal from the workers of the world that their true interests lay with their class brothers regardless of ethnic or national origins. The victory of the proletariat would automatically bring about a withering of these specious distinctions: a common proletarian culture would blend its component parts into a non-antagonistic whole. Hence Mao and his followers would have been ill advised to risk endangering the fragile social order of their new government by trying to force conformity on unwilling groups, when the inexorable laws of history would bring about the same result effortlessly.

Consonant with this conclusion, the government set up so-called autonomous areas for minorities.[18] Areas accorded this status would be free to use their own languages, wear traditional clothing, and retain their customs. A network of minorities institutes was set up: the largest in Beijing, and one in each of the major areas where minorities live. In addition to training party activists in communist ideology and mass mobilization techniques, the institutes were to collect minority folk art and literature and compile histories of the nationalities. In this and other ways, the party declared itself the guardian and developer of minority cultures. When queried about the sort of common proletarian culture that would emerge, party spokespersons would explain that since minorities composed only six percent of the population, Han culture would have to constitute its basis. However, this did not mean assimilation (*tonghua*). The new culture would represent an amalgamation (*ronghe*) of its component cultures.

Within a few years, however, it became apparent that minority cultures were neither disappearing nor blending into a new common culture. Cultural markers came to be seen as manifestations of ideological resistance to party and government. The sentiments expressed by minority critics who were encouraged by the Hundred Flowers period seemed to confirm the leadership's suspicions: some had argued that socialism was incompatible with their ethnic group's culture; others, that they were being victimized by "great Han chauvinism."

This was not quite fair. Mao Zedong was anything but a cultural imperialist: he had the utmost contempt for much of Chinese tradition. One of Mao's earliest writings was an attack on the Confucian family system—an elegy for a young woman who had committed suicide rather than submit to an arranged marriage. He refused to allow the language he imposed on all of China to be called by its former name *guanhua* (Mandarin, or literally "scholar-official speech"). It was now called *putonghua* (common speech) or *guoyü*

[18] Eventually, the government decided that it had fifty-five ethnic minorities. The largest of these, the Zhuang, number about 17 million; the smallest, the Lhoba, about 2,500. Mongols, Tibetans, Kazakhs, Dai (Thai), Uygurs, and Miao are the names of groups most likely to be recognized outside the PRC.

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(national language). What Mao wanted was a genuinely unique common culture—but only one culture—based on a communism that was suitable for China.

The anti-rightist campaign induced a rigid ideological orthodoxy, followed at once by the Great Leap Forward, in which Mao jettisoned the Soviet model of communism in favor of his own variant. The Great Leap Forward tried to take advantage of China's unique characteristics—for example, its large population but shortage of capital, in contrast to the more sparsely populated Soviet Union with its greater capital resources. Hence, the population was set to work at such projects as digging dams with buckets rather than earth-moving machinery. Backyard steel furnaces would substitute for expensive metal production plants.

Minorities were discouraged from wearing their native costumes, since they wasted material and hindered hard physical labor in the fields. They were said to be clamoring to learn Mandarin. Nomads were reported to be enthusiastically surrendering their animals to communes, and Muslims professed to be happy to eat their meals along with Han, whose staple meat was pork.

Rather than the expected rapid industrialization, the Great Leap Forward in fact brought on what Chinese refer to as the "three lean years" of mass starvation, 1959–61. While some Han engaged in passive resistance, some minorities rebelled. Kazakhs and Uygurs fled across the border to the now-hostile Soviet Union, and the Dalai Lama, traditional leader of Tibet, fled to India with over one hundred thousand of his followers.

Culture during the Cultural Revolution

After a brief respite, the undaunted Mao began an even more sweeping standardization movement called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was extremely hostile to Western culture and even more violently opposed to manifestations of Soviet influence. It was similarly opposed to Chinese tradition, variant cultures within the Han, and the traditions of the minority nationalities. The aim of the Cultural Revolution was to create a single new Chinese communist culture.

Being opposed to so many other cultures simultaneously caused a number of problems, however. One could certainly substitute what were known as revolutionary operas for traditional Chinese operas. The plots of the latter focused heavily on the exploits of emperors, their officials, and other characters considered decadent and morally unacceptable to true socialists. Communist soldiers, heroic nurses, and oppressed peasants could be given starring roles instead.

Choosing the background music, however, proved harder. Traditional instruments were unacceptable precisely because they were traditional. Western instruments were unacceptable because they were Western and therefore manifestations of a bourgeois capitalist mindset. One critic went so far as to compare the piano to "bones rattling around in a coffin." He had not reckoned

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with Madame Mao Zedong, who was fond of piano music and ordered it to be the accompaniment for the new operas. When asked if this was not contradictory to the socialist nature of the operas, Madame Mao replied in the negative, explaining that "we have liberated the piano." While foreign sources were much amused by this statement, there is an underlying serious point. Madame Mao's statement implies that there is an answer to the century-old problem of how to import things Western without eroding Confucian—or socialist—values. They must be detached from the context in which they were created.[19]

In the event, however, most foreign things were not considered to have been liberated from their bourgeois or Soviet contexts. Wearing lipstick or a hair ribbon, or displaying a fondness for foreign liquor, music, or literature, could subject an individual to severe persecution and even death. Beethoven's symphonies could not be performed, and foreign literary works were burned. The selected works of Chairman Mao and excerpts therefrom known as the Little Red Book were the only acceptable reading matter. A handful of revolutionary operas and a few drawings—Chairman Mao as a young revolutionary, Chairman Mao addressing party members, Chairman Mao visiting a peasant village—constituted the range of acceptable art. Monoculturalism had reached an extreme.

The same intolerance characterized attitudes toward ethnic minorities. Mao's statement of decades before that "nationality problems are in essence class problems" was reinterpreted to mean nationality problems were nothing *but* class problems. Therefore, any manifestation of ethnic culture was ipso facto evidence of anti-socialist attitudes, and enemies of the people had to be dealt with harshly. Radio stations ceased broadcasting in minority languages. Tibetans were ordered to replace pictures of the Dalai Lama with those of Chairman Mao.

It is impossible to believe that minority cultures were actually erased during the Cultural Revolution, or that Mao Zedong had replaced the Dalai Lama in Tibetans' hearts and minds. The media, however, treated ethnic minorities as if they had become both Han and socialist. An elderly Mongol lady sent by the loving party committee of her area to Beijing for an operation reportedly insisted on taking a bus to the area where Mao lived. There she sat, outside the gate,[20] wishing him long life, in Mandarin. In another example, a Kazakh, responding to the latest alleged intrusion by the Soviet Union, is quoted as saying that if the Soviet imperialists were to attempt to seize a single blade of grass from the ancestral land of China, they would feel his wrath.

In 1971, there was another major change. The Chinese leadership again became more tolerant both of foreign influences and of China's own ethnic

[19] Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 202.

[20] Rather far outside the residence, one imagines. Zhongnanhai, the leadership compound, is set well apart from the rest of the city, and so carefully protected that the one place that it could be glimpsed from, a small bridge, had guards stationed on it to prevent people from looking in or taking photographs.

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minorities. In 1979, after Deng Xiaoping had emerged as successor to Mao, these policies were extended, and even included a certain toleration of different opinions within the Han population.

Multiculturalism in the Post-Mao Era

This change did not represent ideological conversion to multiculturalism, but rather a highly pragmatic accommodation to external and internal factors. The leadership had deemed that both foreign policy and domestic goals would be better served by relaxing the rigid insistence on orthodoxy. With regard to foreign policy, China needed allies against perceived Soviet expansionism. The United States could be useful—and indeed was the only power that was militarily capable of stemming a determined Soviet advance. The support of the Middle East, whose oil Beijing believed to be the immediate object of Soviet desires, was also considered important. The Chinese military had become incapable of defending the country, as the purges of the Cultural Revolution had destroyed the chain of command. In addition, zealots had interpreted Mao's statement to the effect that men, not weapons, were the decisive factor in war to mean that *only* men, and in fact only politically indoctrinated men, were decisive in war. As a consequence, little attention had been given to weapons or training.

Domestically, Deng Xiaoping pointed out that the economy had stagnated under Mao. One reason was Mao's ideological rigidity. During the Cultural Revolution, Deng and his family had been persecuted for a number of alleged deviations from Maoist orthodoxy. The most famous of Deng's heresies, however, was his statement, "It doesn't matter whether it is a black cat or a white cat, as long as it catches mice"—in other words, the test of an economic system is not whether it is communist or capitalist, but whether it produces goods and services.

Deng's reforms were introduced with a Qing dynasty poem which began, "Ten thousand horses stand mute." Creative energies would be unleashed, he hoped, by establishing incentives to produce. This applied to artists and writers as well as farmers and factory workers. Students were sent abroad to learn new skills that would contribute to China's modernization. Those who stayed in China were encouraged to state their views by writing "big character posters." Small journals and magazines proliferated, debating issues that could not even have been raised a few years before. A variety of art forms appeared, both Western and traditional. Satirical plays were produced.

With regard to minorities, policies were similarly liberalized. The dictum that minority problems were class problems was rescinded with the explanation that Mao had been "misunderstood." Ethnic minorities were no longer expected to wither away. In the new post-Mao formulation, differences from the Han were attributed not to class frictions, but to economic inequality. Thus, members of minority groups should concentrate on redressing the income gap between themselves and the Han.

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To this end, border trade was encouraged. Under Mao, party work had aimed at linking minorities' economies firmly with those of Han China. Hence, raw materials from ethnic minority areas were transported, sometimes over very long distances, to factories in Han areas, and consumer goods made the lengthy journey back again. Given that most minorities lived in border areas, it was often more efficient to trade across those borders than with cities like Shanghai or Tianjin.

Multiculturalism meant diversity, diversity implied division, and division meant weakness.

Tourism to minorities' areas was also encouraged. Because of this, the unique costumes, art forms, and other customs that the party had worked so hard to extirpate during the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution became highly valued for their ability to attract tourists, with their even more highly valued foreign exchange.

Minorities were given certain other considerations: the one child policy was relaxed for them, and their children were admitted to universities with scores lower than those required of Han.[21] Partly to draw Muslim countries to China's side against Soviet expansionism and partly to attract petro-dollar investment to the PRC's industrialization effort, Beijing granted special considerations to its Muslim minorities. The Quran was published in China for the first time since 1949, and Chinese Muslims were granted the right to make the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca.

The result was multicultural as well as economically advantageous for large numbers of people. It was also very confusing. What happened to socialism/communism when people were allowed to keep what they earned (after a quota was paid to the state, to be sure) and to inherit money and property? The pursuit of material advantage became rampant. Was this not capitalism? In response, Deng stated that the new system was "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and provided a summary of these characteristics, known as the Four Principles:

- accepting the leadership of the Communist Party;
- adhering to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought;
- practicing democratic centralism; and
- following the socialist road.

Westerners, however, referred to the new system as "market-Leninism": a relatively free economy accompanied by strong assertions of political control

[21] These standards vary for different minorities and in different areas. Where a minority is already numerous and judged relatively advanced economically, such as the Zhuang, Manchus, and Koreans, a second child may be allowed. Smaller minorities in remote areas can have as many as four. In practice, extremely resistant minorities who do not live in major cities seem able to resist any family planning restrictions. Queried on this, a source in Xinjiang said delicately, referring to the Kazakhs, "We give them information if they ask for it." With regard to university entrance, some areas add as few as ten points to examination scores (still a boon in this extremely difficult test); others as many as thirty or (rarely) fifty, depending on the perceived desirability of having a student of a particular nationality.

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(neo-authoritarianism, as it would later be called) from the center. The end goal of this hybrid, like that of the *ti/yong* formulation, was to strengthen China against its enemies while making its people prosperous. To the post-Mao leadership, as to its predecessors, whether Marxist or Confucian, multiculturalism meant diversity, diversity implied division, and division meant weakness. Before it was challenged by the West, Confucianism could not tolerate multiculturalism, since it believed all other cultures to be vastly inferior. After being challenged by the West, Confucianism and Marxism rejected multiculturalism because plurality engendered disorder and weakness against enemies.

Those who tested party/government tolerance soon discovered limits. The new freedoms had been granted because they were instrumental—that is, they would unleash the creative energies of the population—rather than because, as in the West, they were considered one's birthright as a human being. Therefore, these rights could, and in fact should, be rescinded when they no longer served the intended purpose of encouraging economic growth. Advocates of liberalism and democracy who became too vocal were silenced. For example, when poster-writers switched from criticizing the deceased and partially discredited Mao Zedong to disparaging Deng's government, many were arrested and received lengthy prison terms under harsh conditions. In 1980 the right to put up wall posters, demonstrate, and strike was removed from the constitution.

Still, unintended consequences of the reforms proliferated. Chinese youth became attracted to Western culture. The pursuit of wealth encouraged corruption, against which rock groups sang songs of protest. While coastal cities experienced an economic boom, the hinterland, including but not confined to ethnic minority areas, fell behind. Minorities found tourists useful for far more than foreign exchange: some became champions of their independence movements. Tibetans found internationally acclaimed film stars, Buddhist scholars, and heavy-metal bands eager to help their cause; Muslims reportedly received aid and instruction from Hamas, Hezbollah, and Turkish intelligence.

Particularly after the Tiananmen demonstrations and the crumbling of the Soviet bloc, which happened within months of each other, the party/government tried to repress the growth of dissonant voices. Filmmakers had their works censored or edited before they could be released to theaters. Journals and newspapers were more carefully scrutinized for content. One television drama, which appeared before the Tiananmen demonstrations and was not criticized until later, is a case in point. Its title, rendered in English as *River Elegy*, literally means "death of a river at an early age." The river in question is the Yellow River, symbolic of China itself.[22] The authors' message is that Chinese culture died a long time ago; what will save China is to merge with the Pacific Ocean, which symbolizes the West.

Minorities were told that when their religion or culture conflicted with socialism, their religion or culture—not socialism—would have to change. The

[22] Yellow is the imperial color, and Chinese sometimes refer to themselves metaphorically as "children of the Yellow Emperor," a mythical figure who performed heroic deeds.

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party/government would decide how religion and culture would develop, and for members of minority groups to make these judgments was tantamount to subversion. Acts of defiance would be punished.

While individuals have indeed been punished, the expression of diverse viewpoints and cultures continues. Neoleftists who want to restore a state-owned and -directed economy spar intellectually with those who believe better results would be obtained from a less fettered system. A neo-Confucian camp argues that modernization is not the same as Westernization and that the Chinese tradition, including the works of Confucius, is the best underpinning for a uniquely Chinese form of modernization. Liberals counter that since these would-be neo-Confucians were educated in a Marxist/Maoist school system and therefore know nothing about Chinese tradition or Confucius, they are really trying to invent a past that suits their political agenda. In a development that would have been unthinkable in Mao's physically combative monocultural society, neoleftists took liberals to court for quoting one of their broadsides without permission and for allegedly misrepresenting its contents. They lost their case.

Dissonant ethnic minorities do not participate in this debate and are kept under close surveillance. Those who seek independence find little sympathy even from Han dissidents who are otherwise opposed to the party and government. Only a few dissidents are willing to consider a federated government in which minorities are able to practice genuine autonomy.

Individual efforts to gain toleration for diverse viewpoints are dangerous, as dissidents discovered when they attempted to register, in accordance with regulations, a political party other than the Communist Party. They were convicted of transgressing laws that prohibit acts endangering social stability. Party and government continue to insist that there is but one true view on issues and that the leadership will be the judge thereof. Nonetheless, a greater degree of cultural diversity continues to exist. Meanwhile, the search for a formula that will allow China to become strong and wealthy without discarding its unique characteristics (whether construed as Confucian or communist or some blend thereof) continues.

A late 1992 adaptation of theater-of-the-absurd playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *Romulus the Great* is eerily reminiscent of the dilemma posed by Woren and Yan Fu a century ago. Set in ancient Rome at the time the barbarians (i.e., the West) are storming the gates of the capital (Beijing), emperor Romulus (Deng) announces that he intends to save the empire (communism) by destroying it. The only hope, he says, is to go into a business partnership with the barbarian tycoons, since his choice is between a catastrophic capitalism and a capital catastrophe. The play once closed briefly, but not, it was later discovered, because it had been censored. The leadership had requested that the cast put on a private performance for them.

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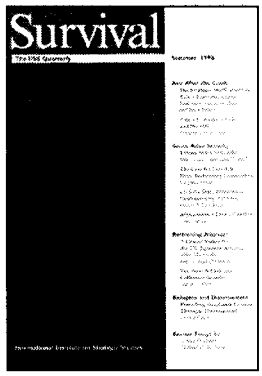

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Multiculturalism in History

Merits and Perils of Teaching Cultures

by Walter A. McDougall

Nothing in my experience sums up the merits and perils of studying other cultures better than an appalling week I spent at Fort Sill in February 1969. Almost all of us recent graduates from artillery school had orders for Vietnam, and so we were subjected to a week of what the army called "In-Country Orientation." A model Vietnamese fortified hamlet had been constructed there on the Oklahoma plains, and our instructor, a butter-bar lieutenant no older than I, insisted that its defenses were impregnable, as if none of us had ever heard the frequent news reports of villages overrun. We were also told what to do in case of an ambush: which is not to get pinned down, but charge right into the enemy's guns. And we learned all about the poisonous serpents and insects we could expect to encounter. In sum, far from boosting our morale and making us gung-ho, the course left us feeling utterly terrified and unprepared. But worst of all was when they herded hundreds of us into an auditorium to hear a lecture on Vietnamese culture and society. The instructor was not a scholarly expert, or a native Vietnamese, or perhaps a Green Beret who knew Vietnamese and had lived with the people. Rather, the teacher was a grizzled drill sergeant who paraphrased a manual, stumbling over his words. "Awright, you mens, listen up! You will now git orientated into Vit-mese so-ciety. Da mostly thing y'all gots to know is dat Vit-nam is a Confusion society. Dat means that ever'body is in a kind of high-arky: like the chillun obey deir parents, and the womens obey deir mens, and ever'body obeys the guv-ment. It's sorta like da army chain o' command."

I must have stopped listening, because that is all I remember. But looking back, I can imagine that orientation as a metaphor of the whole U.S. enterprise in Southeast Asia. As our current fiasco in the Balkans demonstrates anew, Americans make a habit of declaring a war, sending over massive firepower, then expressing amazement when the locals do not bend at once to our will. Only then do we finally decide that it might be a good idea to learn something about the history and culture of the people we are trying to bludgeon, help, and change. Not that a common soldier needs an advanced

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degree in multicultural studies, but it would help if our policymakers took time to study the world over which they profess to exercise a benevolent hegemony.

The value of studying other cultures is not something we Americans, or Westerners in general, discovered only recently, as a consequence of having our consciousness raised by the multiculturalists. Medieval Christians were fascinated by their Muslim adversaries. The Age of Exploration inspired Europeans to collect information about the strange lands they discovered, think of themselves as one civilization among many, and ask what caused the differences, as well as similarities, among cultures. The Enlightenment systematized the study of non-Western peoples, giving birth eventually to world history (Voltaire), encyclopedias (Diderot), and comparative politics (Montesquieu). In the nineteenth century, archaeology, cultural anthropology, comparative religion, and a new burst of European imperialism enriched the study of other civilizations, however much solipsistic Westerners took for granted the superiority of their own ways and assumed that all other peoples must inevitably follow in their path. As Walt Whitman wrote,

> One thought ever at the fore
> That in the Divine Ship, breasting time and space
> All peoples of the globe together sail, sail the same voyage
> Are bound to the same destination.

Today's radical multiculturalists accordingly disparage what they call Europe's "Enlightenment Project" as a campaign to explore, subdue, and study the whole world for the purpose of controlling it, exploiting it, and ultimately making it an extension of Western civilization. That is highly tendentious, but does have a measure of truth. At Amherst College in 1964, all of us freshmen were obliged to take History 1, a course that developed themes in world history rather than Western Civ, and as such was very progressive. But the themes chosen were invariably Western themes projected onto the history of other civilizations. One early block of material dealt with the conquest of Mexico by Cortes. To be sure, we were taught about pre-Columbian cultures, but whereas I remember a good deal about the Spanish side of this culture clash, literally all I remember about the Aztec side was their belief that a hummingbird on the left was an omen of good luck—or was it bad luck? Anyway, "hummingbird-on-the-left" became a stock laugh line for Amherst students.

A later instruction block compared the Mexican, Chinese, and Young Turk revolutions of the early twentieth century, a truly interesting exercise. But the theme uniting them was "paths to modernization," so it was not the essence of historic Mexican, Chinese, or Islamic culture that was at issue, but rather the struggles of those civilizations to come to grips with their backwardness and adopt Western ways. Indeed, I do not think I ever studied other cultures on their own terms—independent of Western intrusions—until my graduate years at Chicago, when I read the books of William H. McNeill, beginning with *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community.* To be sure, Amherst and Chicago had many professors who specialized in other cultures and offered

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courses on them. But those of us in mainstream fields such as European and American history were not exposed to true multicultural education in the survey courses of high school and college.

McNeill was a tireless advocate for the study of world history and other cultures long before it became fashionable. But alas, no sooner did his campaign for world history, as opposed to Western Civ surveys, begin to gain ground than the whole movement was captured by the ideological multiculturalists, Afrocentrists, ethnic lobbies, and victim groups who substituted curricula that depicted Western Civ as a story of progress for curricula that damned Western Civ as a story of plunder, rapine, imperialism, exploitation, and slavery. In other words, the focus was *still* on the West, with other cultures appearing mostly as virginal victims.

Another expression of the multicultural trend is less subjective, but anodyne, and that is the "non-Western" requirement that so many college majors, including the International Relations program I direct, impose on their students. We feel we must make a bow toward multiculturalism, so we just insist that students take one or two courses that are non-Western in focus. The implicit purpose would seem to be to sensitize students to other cultural traditions and alert them to the astonishing fact that there is a whole world out there beyond Great Neck, Long Island, and Newport Beach, California. (I recently asked an I.R. major if he had had any experience traveling abroad. He proudly said yes, he had been to Cancun.) But what good does one course on sub-Saharan Africa or Ming China really achieve? It is not enough to make one really conversant in African or Chinese history, religion, and society, and it certainly tells one nothing about the variety of human cultures. Ultimately, instead of acquiring new categories to use in thinking about human nature and history, the student merely receives a smattering of knowledge that is *hors de categorie:* outside Western norms, and therefore just strange. Rather, it is like the high school athletic program that—in between major sports—schedules two days of lacrosse and handball just to let students know that those games exist.

Should we teach our students about other cultures? Absolutely! But do we succeed? I think most of us do not. First, because few of us are qualified to teach about Islam, or India, or traditional China or Japan. We may do better than that drill sergeant, but do we risk just conveying new stereotypes to students, rather than getting beyond stereotypes? And how do we integrate non-Western material into existing courses? The recent debate over the National History Standards reveals the difficulty in doing this, even leaving aside all political controversy. The easiest way is to retain the old Western Civ chronology, but to insert flashback sections on other cultures at the moment Europeans first come into contact with them. Needless to say, that is still Eurocentric. Another way is to grant Western Civ merely an equal status, and to study each culture in turn: a month on China, a month on India, a month on Europe, and so forth. But that artificially disconnects civilizations from each other, ignoring perhaps the most powerful theme in McNeill's works, which is the cross-cultural

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borrowing, challenge, and response mechanism that is so often the engine of historical change.

Only multicultural history can teach students the ways all human beings are alike.

What is more, the teacher who goes into some depth about other cultures on their own terms, clearly a good thing on the face of it, runs the risk of offending someone's self-esteem and landing in the principal's or dean's office on charges of insensitivity or even racism! But if we are going to teach about other cultures on their own terms, and not just as targets for Western imperialism, then we must stress the bad and ugly as well as the good: the oppression, slavery, and reciprocal racism and brutality among Asian and African peoples themselves. We must teach about the binding of girls' feet in China, the forced suicide of widows in India, the Islamic texts that place women somewhere above goats but below cattle, the genital mutilation of women in Africa. Now, we can try to deflect criticism by drumming into children's heads that they must not make value judgments, especially ones based, after all, on Western traditions: the Bible and the Enlightenment. But to try to be value-free about, for instance, Aztec human sacrifice, slavery in the Islamic world, or the barbaric tortures practiced by the Comanches and Apaches, is to do exactly what we all say must *not* be done with regard to the darker chapters of Western history. Thus, even as we try to explain to students why the Spanish Inquisition was set up, or how the Nazis could come to power in Germany, we quickly add that whereas we must try to understand the past on its own terms, to understand is not to forgive: *zu verstehen ist nicht zu vergeben.* So we cannot just give all other cultures a "pass" when it comes to their inhumane practices. But to condemn the "bad" in other cultures is by definition to impose a Western standard of good and bad.

Above all, to treat other cultures in isolation, to censor aspects of their history that might damage some student's self-esteem, or to refrain from making any moral judgments at all, is to cheat students of the one thing they need to learn most, and which only multicultural history can teach them: and that is the many ways in which all human beings, all cultures and civilizations, are alike. For no real toleration among peoples can exist unless they are given a reason to imagine themselves and others as "we," and not just as "we" and "they." In what ways are all people alike? They are all *Homo sapiens*, they are all conceived and born the same way, and they all face the certainty of death. They all live on the same planet and need food and shelter. They all wonder about the meaning of life, love, tragedy, and what if anything happens after they die. They have different answers to the eternal questions, and they invent different political and social forms to order their brief and toilsome time on this earth. But at bottom they are all alike. Thus, Chinese are not angels, but neither are they aliens.

I have no solution to the curricular issues, except to insist that all high school students take at least three full years of history—one being world history. Alas, in many states the trend is to cut back, not expand, history requirements. But I did hit upon a technique this semester for handling the "self-esteem"

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issue, which seemed to work. (At least, I have not as yet been summoned to the office of the Penn ombudsperson.) In my last lecture in the modern history survey, I asked students to recall a question that I had posed in the first lecture: not why people and societies so often do bad things, but rather why on occasion they do good things, why on occasion people have taken risks and made sacrifices in order to improve the lot of others. Evil is banal and universal. What is shocking and in need of explanation in history is the good.

Thus, I granted that European and American civilization has been imperialistic and exploitative. But so has every other civilization in history. What is unique about the West is that it invented *anti*-imperialism. I granted that the West practiced slavery. But so has every other civilization in history. What is unique about the West is that it gave rise to an *anti*-slavery movement. I granted that the West has waged war on a ferocious scale. But so has every other civilization at one time or another. What is unique about the West is that it tried over and over to devise international systems that might prevent war. I granted that women were in a subordinate status throughout Western history. But so were they in every other civilization. What is unique about the West is that it spawned a movement for female equality. And I granted that the West has known tyranny and indeed totalitarianism of the most brutal sort. But forms of tyranny and even genocide have appeared in all other civilizations. What is unique about the West is that it alone has declared certain human rights to be universal and tried to devise governments that expand, not crush, liberty.

What is needed to ensure that multicultural education can be a glue and not a solvent of American community is dedicated, knowledgeable, and above all honest teaching. All civilizations are worthy of celebration by dint of their being civilizations, that is, extraordinary examples of collective human invention. But all have also been horribly flawed by dint of their being human creations. If Western civilization appears to have done more nasty things in recent centuries, it is not because it is worse than others, but only because it has lately been the most powerful. What is more, the three ways in which people from all the world, while cherishing their diversity, can nevertheless identify themselves as part of a single human community are themselves gifts of Western civilization. Those unifying forces are science and technology, the Enlightenment doctrine of natural law and natural rights, and the astounding Judeo-Christian theology to the effect that all human beings are children of one and the same loving God.

Unfortunately, the radical multiculturalists denounce science and technology as an evil, masculine "discourse" that oppresses the weak, pollutes the environment, and privileges "linear thinking." They attack the "Enlightenment Project" as an ideological cover for Western cultural imperialism. And they hate the Bible for promoting patriarchy and heterosexism. In so doing, they are attempting to destroy the very principles under which toleration of diverse cultures has in fact the best chance of flowering! In so doing, the multiculturalists help to perpetuate the tragedy that Alexander Solzhenitsyn called "A World Split Apart." Asked to deliver the Harvard commencement address in 1978, Solzhenitsyn, a survivor of the Soviet gulag, shocked his audience by proclaiming

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that the line that divides the world does not run between communism and capitalism, or along the boundaries between nations, races, social classes, or genders. The line that splits the world apart runs straight through the middle of each human heart.

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A Russian Rearmament Wish List

by Richard F. Staar

In 1993 the Clinton administration appeared to take charge of American post–Cold War foreign policy with a single assumption in mind: Russia was now benign, a basket case, or both, and could therefore be taken for granted. So it was that, while various commentators warned of the fragility of Russia's democracy and called for significant programs to promote the growth of civil society and the private economy there, the administration turned its attention elsewhere. With the exception of the 1993 Cooperative Threat Reduction (or Nunn-Lugar) Act that provides money and expertise to help the Russians dismantle nuclear weapons, the United States confined its Russian policy to moral support for President Boris Yeltsin and rhetorical nods to "strategic partnership" even as it went ahead with the expansion of NATO. The Russians, in turn, more or less loudly lamented their loss of superpower status, rued their military's poor showing in the Chechnya conflict, and took to selling off sophisticated weapons systems to China, Iran, and other potentially mischievous regimes. Above all, Russia's economic collapse and the near bankruptcy of its government seemed to squelch all hopes its nationalists, military leadership, and military-industrial complex harbored of restoring Russia's weight in the global balance of power. In fact, Russia's strategic position has only receded in the 1990s. Clearly unable to afford the Cold War military establishment he inherited, Yeltsin has cut personnel from the ranks, allowed the navy to rust, and de-emphasized all conventional weaponry in favor of nuclear deterrence.

Is Russia benign, a basket case, or both? And will it remain so? The answer, we now know, is: not if the Ministry of Defense has its way. Earlier this year a remarkable document came to light, shedding light on the way some top officials, at least in Moscow, envisage the renaissance of Russian power and high-technology expertise. Prepared by the General Staff at the Ministry of Defense, the report is entitled "Prognosis for Financial and Economic Support of Military Construction until 2010," and it is nothing less than a blueprint for

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the development of a new generation of defense-related technology and weapons systems.[1]

According to the document's timetable, the most difficult period for the Russian defense industry will be the immediate future, 1999 to 2002, since it is estimated that only half of the required defense expenditures will materialize over those years. Should that 50 percent shortfall continue beyond 2002, the ministry's worst-case estimates indicate that funds for modernization will shrink, not increase, as a percentage of the overall military budget. A modest increase in funding for research and development in the early years of the new century would be only slightly better, because a mere incremental increase would not be sufficient to produce genuine technological breakthroughs. The best-case scenario, and the one the ministry is obviously lobbying for, is summarized in the following schedule:

> 1. Increase in military expenditures from 2.6 percent of Russia's gross domestic product (GDP), the figure for 1999, to between 6.0 and 6.5 percent of GDP by 2005.
>
> 2. Reduction of military personnel from the current level of 1.2 million to 550,000, a number that can be financed with only 3.0 to 3.5 percent of GDP.
>
> 3. Radical change in specific priorities in the state budget in favor of research and development aimed at a new generation of weapons and supporting technologies.[2]

Inasmuch as current projections indicate that Russia's GDP will drop by another 5 percent in 1999 and increase by 2 percent at most in 2000, followed by growth in the 3 to 4 percent range, this wish list from the Ministry of Defense might seem chimerical.[3] But another recent Russian study, written by a Ministry of Defense insider in the fall of 1998, indicates otherwise. The latter article's author, Nikolai V. Mikhailov, is no bitter general, but one of the two first deputy ministers (the other being the chief of the General Staff) and thus the highest-ranking civilian in the ministry. He has been vocal about Russia's need to "preserve" (not recover) its great power status and about the measures needed to attain that objective.[4] He worked in the Soviet and Russian military-industrial complex for thirty-five years (1961–96) and, as a student of the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs, has predicted that the period between 2010 and 2020 will witness the transition to a qualitatively different kind of warfare. What

[1] "Prognosis for Financial and Economic Support of Armed Forces Development until 2010," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* (hereafter, *NVO*), Feb. 5–11, 1999 (in Russian).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Russian projections for GDP are from Dr. Michael S. Bernstam's data bank at the Hoover Institution, where he is a research fellow.

[4] Nikolai V. Mikhailov, "Russia May Preserve Great Power Status," *NVO*, Sept. 25–Oct. 1, 1998 (in Russian).

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is more, in this revelatory article Mikhailov openly challenges Yeltsin, stating that the official government program for rearmament up to 2005 (approved by Yeltsin in 1996) is simply no longer applicable in light of recent budgetary shortfalls. He notes that 84 percent of all Russian armament plants have received an average of only 10 million (1996) rubles per year, not even sufficient to fulfill the contracts advanced by the government itself.[5]

Indeed, the very survival of the military-industrial complex (*voenno-promyshlennyi kompleks*, or VPK) over the long haul depends on the defense budget in general and special research and development allocations in particular. So far as basic research is concerned, Russia frankly admits that it now ranks highest in the world (or at least equivalent with the United States) in only two of the fifteen most important military-related technologies: unique nuclear technologies and lasers. In the thirteen other critical fields, including microelectronics, biotechnology, and information technology, the Russians admit to shortfalls or even serious deficiencies compared to world leaders.[6] If Russia is to realize its ambition to be a major power in world politics, it must overtake its competitors in the other areas, which in turn makes it imperative that a common governmental position be formulated for an armaments program covering the years 2001–2010. The first objective in such a ten-year plan would be to preserve the nucleus of Russia's scientific and defense industries. A second objective would be to couple that infrastructure with the locomotive of visionary investigative and experimental research programs presumably directed at the development of futuristic weapons systems.[7]

The 1999 General Staff document clearly contains optimistic figures regarding the percentage of GDP that will be put into defense and the percentage of the defense budget that will be designated for research, development, and procurement of new weapons. It also contends that twenty-first-century weapons must be produced through: (a) government support of fundamental nuclear research to achieve a radical increase in the effectiveness of new nuclear warheads and delivery systems; (b) modernization of standards and quality-control mechanisms that regulate production of armaments; and (c) expansion in the use of technological systems that meet the international state of the art.

The authors of the General Staff document are not so sanguine as to expect that the central government will be able to carry out its whole program. On the contrary, they observe that "experience in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Irkutsk, Komsomolsk-on-Amur, Tatarstan, and other regions indicates that local governments as well as financial-industrial groups have influenced progressive reform in VPK enterprises which in a number of cases have proven more effective than the influence of federation authorities [in Moscow]."[8] Thus, they imply that Moscow needs to learn from and apply these local achievements to its own endeavors to reform the VPK.

[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.
[8] "Prognosis for Financial and Economic Support."

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Table 1: Selected Defense Expenditures, Projected 1998–2010
(percentage of defense budget)

Year	R&D (NIOKR)*	State Defense Order**	Totals
1998	11	13	24
1999	25	16	41
2000	25	16	41
2001	43	24	67
2002	43	23	66
2003	43	23	66
2004	43	22	65
2005	29	13	42
2006	29	13	42
2007	29	13	42
2008	29	12	41
2009	29	12	41
2010	29	12	41

* Scientific research and experimental design work (NIOKR-*nauchno-issledovatel'skie i opytno-konstruktorskie raboty*). ** State Defense Order (*Goszakaz-gosudarstvennyi oboronnyi zakaz*) is the amount allocated for procurement of new weapons systems and appears as a separate item in the annual budget for the armed forces.

Sources: "Projection for Financial and Economic Support of Armed Forces Development until 2010," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, Feb. 5–11, 1999. See also Aleksei Shulunov, "If the Military-Industrial Complex Collapses," *Ekonomika i zhizhn'*, July 1998, p. 6, for annual percentages between 1989 and 1998 (both sources in Russian).

Still, if it is to be realized, the foregoing plan for a world-class Russian Revolution in Military Affairs will require a substantial increase in the central government's defense allocations. Published budgetary information, however, is as vague and indecipherable as during Soviet times. The 1998 budget not only offers nothing in terms of specifics or line items, it excludes the sums spent on Russia's fifteen "other armies," the security forces whose commanding officers report directly to the president and receive unknown amounts of cash from the president's discretionary funds.[9] The largest of these forces are the troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Border Service, Civil Defense, the Railroad Guards, the Federal Security Agency, the Foreign Intelligence Service, and the Communications and Information Agency. According to a deputy chairman of the Duma's defense committee, total funding for the fifteen presidential armed forces amounted to some $8 billion in 1997, and their total strength was in the range of 1.2 million men—about equal to that of the regular armed forces.[10]

[9] "Financing Armed Forces under Control of the President," *Krasnaia zvezda*, Aug. 13, 1998 (in Russian).
[10] Alexei G. Arbatov, "Military Reform in Russia," *International Security*, Spring 1998, p. 98.

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The current military budget, which became law in February 1999, likewise contains many items that are concealed under innocuous designations within the budgets of other ministries.[11] Numerical strengths of the regular armed forces, as well as funds for the Yeltsin rearmament program and the routine maintenance of troops, appear only in secret annexes. But in June, Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin did reveal that 28.5 percent of this year's government budget will be spent on defense, state security, and law enforcement.[12] The other, more significant items in the successive annual defense budgets, however, pertain to the funds allocated for the state defense order (*goszakaz*) and scientific research and experimental design work (NIOKR). The figures in table 1 suggest that a crash program of some sort is planned in the above two areas from 2001 to 2004 which, if implemented, would consume about two-thirds of all defense spending and then decline to about two-fifths of the budget until 2010.

On what will those funds in the bulge in the research budget be spent? Examples of the comprehensive program of modernization Russia hopes to undertake include big-ticket items that are already, or soon will be, coming off the assembly lines:

- The new fourth-generation Topol M-2 (NATO designation SS-27) intercontinental ballistic missile is in serial production, with the first ten deployed during the latter months of 1998 and forty to be deployed by the end of 1999.

- A new tactical nuclear weapon system with a range of 400 kilometers and tested successfully in 1995 may be in production now.

- Miniature nuclear warheads weighing just 198 pounds are in production.

- The *Iurii Dolgoruki*, the first of between ten and sixteen strategic *Boreas*-class submarines armed with the new SS-NX-28 submarine-launched ballistic missile, had its keel laid in November 1996; each boat will carry between sixteen and ninety-six reentry vehicles on its sixteen missiles.[13]

Futuristic weapons systems already under development at Russian design bureaus include:

[11] Efim Liuboshits and Vitalii Tsymbal, "Military Budget for 1999 Remains Incomplete," *NVO*, Mar. 26–Apr. 1, 1999 (in Russian).

[12] Vladimir Georgiev, "Military Budget Becomes a State Secret," *NVO*, Mar. 4–10, 1999 (in Russian). Stepashin's statement in FBIS-SOV-1999-0605, Moscow Radio, June 5, 1999.

[13] General Staff Col. (ret.) Denis Baranets, "The Great Secret," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Aug. 7, 1997 (in Russian).

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- directed-energy weapons including lasers, microwave radiation emitters, and particle-beam generators that use subatomic particles to destroy targets at the speed of light;[14]

- a new mass plasma weapon, already tested, that could ionize the atmosphere and create such enormous stress as to destroy incoming missiles and aircraft;

- a new radar to detect stealth weapons systems;

- indigenous air-launched stealth cruise missiles;

- and possibly, according to information recently released, a new S-400 "Triumph" anti-aircraft and anti-missile system with a range of 250 miles, and a plasma coating that would make fifth-generation Russian aircraft invisible.[15]

The Russian Security Council, which convened in Moscow on April 28, 1999, heard President Yeltsin himself call for an across-the-board upgrade of research, development, and production of a new generation of nuclear weapons. The news agency TASS quoted him as saying:

> Today, we must consider in detail the entire technological cycle of the nuclear weapons sector, including research in the field of nuclear arms, the conduct of tests, and the production and storage of such weapons with the assurance of their safety and reprocessing.[16]

Such experiments are currently being conducted at the remote Arctic testing facility on Novaia Zemliia, where the "new tests will take place on a completely different qualitative level and as a matter of priority."[17]

Assessing the Data

What does all of this mean? Obviously, decision makers in the Kremlin intend to adapt their armed forces to the Revolution in Military Affairs, which they imagine will only accelerate in the decades to come. If, as Mikhailov and the General Staff hope, they commit some two-thirds of the defense budget after the turn of the century to research, development, and acquisition of futuristic weapons systems, they might realistically hope to "leapfrog" past the United

[14] Maj. Gen. V.I. Slipchenko, then General Staff research director, cited in Mary C. Fitzgerald, "The Russian Image of Future War," *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1994), p. 168.

[15] Nikolai Novichkov, "American 'Stealth' Outdated," *NVO*, Feb. 5–11, 1999 (in Russian).

[16] Cited by J. Michael Waller in *Russian Reform Monitor*, May 14, 1999, p. 1.

[17] Vladimir Georgiev, "Russia Perfects Its Nuclear Weapons," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, May 12, 1999 (in Russian).

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States and NATO powers, not to mention China and other potential rivals, in new technologies: to pull off, in short, another Sputnik-type shock fifty years after the Soviet Union opened the Space Age. However, the bottom line of the Kremlin's wish list is this: it cannot attain or even approach its ambitious objectives without spending billions it does not and will not possess *unless it receives funds of that magnitude from international sources.* In other words, the Russian state can afford to pour investment into weapons research only insofar as its civilian expenditures are covered by monies provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or friendly foreign governments.

The Kremlin's ambitious goals are only possible with international financial assistance.

The United States, as noted above, has given little in its own right (although it provides the lion's share of IMF funding), and the $1.7 billion transferred under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program is meant to secure fissile materials and nuclear warheads.[18] However, Congress extended this arrangement for an additional seven years in June 1999 to the tune of another $2.8 billion even though the Russians have defaulted on the original fifty-fifty funding formula, and now some U.S. officials are proposing that the United States pick up the whole tab for disposing of Russia's redundant nuclear stockpile. What is more, the Russian officials themselves are behaving like the Iraqis and North Koreans when it comes to transparency and inspections regarding the destruction (or even the storage) of the highly enriched uranium and plutonium that are supposedly being extracted from their warheads.[19]

The most immediate security fear in the West, of course, is that Russia's loose nuclear materials and technology will find their way—with or without Moscow's imprimatur or knowledge—into the hands of rogue regimes around the rim of Eurasia. But the middle-range threat to the West is that the obsolete Russian weapons being destroyed at American expense will simply be replaced by new generations of strategic and tactical weapons of mass destruction. The Russian Security Council's press service in Moscow has even reported Yeltsin's approval in March 1999 of a new policy for nuclear deterrence that defines the "conditions for using these weapons" in the defense of Russia or her allies "when all other measures have not been able to eliminate the threat."[20] That in itself is hardly novel, but the novel implication of the policy statement, according to the press service, is that Russia proposes to use nuclear weapons in a first-strike mode and probably without warning.

Nevertheless, the U.S. Department of Energy continues to provide Russia with an estimated $11.5 billion in exchange for some five hundred tons of

[18] Brian Hall, "Overkill Is Not Dead," *New York Times Magazine*, March 15, 1999, p. 42.

[19] On-site report of the U.S. General Accounting Office reported in *Weapons of Mass Destruction: Effort to Reduce Russian Arsenals May Cost More, Achieve Less Than Planned* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, Apr. 1999), GAO/NSAID-99-76, pp. 3–11.

[20] "From the Kremlin: A Guarantee of Security," *Krasnaia zvezda*, Mar. 16, 1999 (in Russian).

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highly-enriched uranium removed from warheads. According to the agreement, over a twenty-year period the United States was to dilute this uranium for use in American nuclear power plants. However, from the very beginning the Russians have violated the agreement by providing uranium that is already diluted. What is the origin of this material? Could it be that the diluted uranium foisted off on the Americans is not being removed from weapons, but is instead being manufactured in that form at "secret cities" such as Krasnoiarsk-26, Sverdlovsk-44, and Tomsk-7? If such is the case, then American taxpayers are not only being swindled, they are helping to subsidize the next generation of Russian weapons.

Another General Accounting Office report derived from an on-site inspection of a separate Department of Energy program, the Nuclear Cities Initiative, revealed that the United States is paying the salaries of Russian scientists in three of the "secret cities" and will ultimately do so at all ten classified installations. The audit discovered some disturbing facts: first, that U.S. officials "do not always know how many scientists are receiving funding"; secondly, that "some scientists currently working on Russia's weapons of mass destruction are receiving program funds"; and thirdly, that "some dual use projects may have unintentionally provided [U.S.] defense-related information [that] could negatively affect U.S. national security interests." The program will cost the U.S. government another $600 million over the next five years.[21]

Finally, with a foreign debt already exceeding $150 billion, Russia's draft budget for the year 2000 is based on the expectation of receiving $4.5 billion more from the IMF to cover its deficits. This is part of the same budget that provides for an increase in defense spending from 2.8 percent to 3.5 percent of GDP.[22] In sum, the United States will, in all these ways, be helping to finance Russia's new ten-year plan for rearmament.

Perhaps that is beyond American policymakers' powers of understanding. Or perhaps they are so fixated on the goal of "strategic partnership" with Moscow—a goal the Russians evidently never shared—that they are willing to look the other way when Moscow diverts Western aid into military channels. One can only hope that the U.S. Congress, which retains the power of the purse, refuses to continue programs that provide direct or indirect support to the Russian military-industrial complex, and remembers the wisdom of President Reagan's slogan at the 1986 Reykjavik summit: *doveriai no proveriai*—trust, but verify.

[21] *Nuclear Nonproliferation: Concerns with DOE's Efforts to Reduce the Risks Posed by Russia's Unemployed Scientists* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, Feb. 1999), GAO/RCED-99-54, pp. 3–4, 53. See also Michael J. Costigan and William C. Martel, "Our Failure to Convert Russia's Arms Industry," *Orbis*, Summer 1999, pp. 461–78.

[22] The numbers are from Prime Minister Stepashin himself. Quoted by Vitalii Denisov, "Prime Minister Looks into the Future," *Krasnaia zvezda*, May 21, 1999 (in Russian).

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How to Think about Ethnic Conflict

by Chester A. Crocker

I have been asked to speak to the question of the challenge of ethnic conflict in U.S. foreign policy.[1] The subject, of course, could not be more timely because of the Balkan wars. I do not intend to give you a remedy for the Balkan wars, but I do want to clarify one thing. *We* are not waging ethnic conflict, *they* are. Just in case there is doubt in anyone's mind.

In point of fact, a number of different wars have been raging in the former Yugoslavia, including Kosovo. The first was a preventive war that did not really work. The second was a deterrent war. We are now at the phase of an extinguishing, or punitive war, meant to punish the perpetrators of the previous conflicts. Finally, we shall soon enter the phase of a war of reversal, undoing misdeeds or preparing to do so. And at the same time, we are fighting a war of alliance maintenance insofar as the health, if not life, of NATO has been called into question. If you are confused as I go down this list, I do not think you are alone. This is a rather feckless process. But it is a very important one with very important stakes. We must find a way to arrive at a definition of victory to which we can all subscribe before we are done with this chapter.

I would like to focus in my remarks on three points. First of all, some myths have arisen surrounding the idea of ethnic conflict in our foreign policy over the period of time since the Berlin Wall came down. As a result, there is a need for clearer public discourse about ethnic conflict, its place in our foreign policy, and how we might want to think about it as it impacts on our interests in the post–Cold War era.

Secondly, I would like to say a few words about the scholarly work done in the field of ethnic conflict and what it adds up to at this point in time.

[1] This essay is adapted from the Perlmutter Lecture on Ethnic Conflict, delivered May 25, 1999, as the keynote address of the Foreign Policy Research Institute's conference "Ethnic Conflict: The Role of Religion, the Media, and the Mediator." The Perlmutter Lectures and the Program on Ethnic Conflict are sponsored by Howard V. Perlmutter and Foulie Psalidas-Perlmutter.

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The scholarly and nongovernmental community generally have done quite a bit by way of researching this phenomenon. If the insights arrived at could be operationalized through the policy process—or to put it another way, if we had a foreign policy process interested in operationalizing it—we could well devise more credible and practical strategic remedies for dealing with ethnic conflict.

My conclusion concerns the strategic implications of ethnic conflict. How do we define the enemy, affect the enemy, and cope with our own limitations? How, in short, can we develop some "traction" on the ground in places like Kosovo, which we seem to have lacked in the past?

Debunking the Myths

Let us begin with the myths. One myth that should be laid aside very quickly is the notion that ethnic conflict is new. It is as old as mankind. What is more, the database developed at the University of Maryland by Ted Robert Gurr amply demonstrates that ethnic conflict remained with us throughout the Cold War period, and—contrary to myth—is no more prevalent now than it was before the Cold War ended.[2] What is new is the way ethnic conflict has leapt onto center stage due to the structural changes brought about by the end of the Cold War international system and the European colonial system that predated it. These structural changes have promoted, or highlighted, ethnic conflict, first, by challenging the personal identity of the masses, the men and women in the street, and encouraging them to act forcefully on the basis of ethnicity; and secondly, by creating career opportunities for the would-be leaders of all kinds of new political movements, including ethnically based ones. Indeed, many of the acts presently played out on the global stage and described as ethnic conflict are in reality more complicated.

In sum, the first point I wish to make is that we should not entertain the notion that wars of ethnicity and identity are a wholly new phenomenon. What is new is the breakdown of the structures that previously contributed to keeping such conflicts under some control.

The second myth that must be dispelled is the idea that these conflicts are so intractable as to be beyond our ability to influence. We are told that they involve ancient hatreds, primordial sentiments, and reciprocal vengeance. We are told that such conflicts, deplorable as they are, lie essentially within the sovereign domestic arena of the countries involved, and thus we have no right to intervene in them. We are told that ethnic conflicts are uniformly ugly, and that if we think for a moment that war in the former Yugoslavia is a good guys/bad guys situation, we are greatly mistaken: just wait until we get to know the Kosovo Liberation Army up close and personal. Hence, it is best to stay

[2] Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993).

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out. Finally, we are told that "superpowers don't do windows."[3] Leave it for the Chinese to wage ethnic conflict in Tibet, or the Indonesians to do so in East Timor, or the Italians on occasion to intervene in Albania (which they actually did rather well), or the Russians to do it in the Caucasus. Americans are both too wise and too important, in terms of our military role in the world, to volunteer to walk between dogs and lampposts.

That attitude, too, is a myth, for the United States cannot disavow all strategic responsibility and expect to remain a great nation, a nation that will lead and be accepted by others as a leader. We cannot focus exclusively on defining ethnic threats out of existence, because they are among the primary threats that we face.

Defining ethnic conflicts as "too hard" will not take us very far.

"What about 'exit strategies'?" you may ask. "Surely we cannot get sucked into ethnic conflict unless we see in advance a way out." Well, President Roosevelt did not go into World War II thinking about an exit strategy. We cannot necessarily wait until one side capitulates. We cannot always expect there to be mutual exhaustion or mutually damaging stalemates. We cannot wait for there to be a peace to keep. So I would attack this myth head on. Defining every ethnic conflict as "too hard" is not going to take us very far.

The third myth concerns the very terminology of ethnic conflict. It is only one label, but "ethnic conflict" can be a response to stimuli of all kinds. It can be a response to the removal of alien rule. It can be simply the playing out of political entrepreneurship. It can be a response to the creation of new economic threats and opportunities. It can be the response to, or the result of, premature elections that turn out to be one-time plebiscites in the absence of structural machinery to hold a country together in a power-sharing constitution. Ethnic conflict can arise from the collapse of a state or an empire.

It should be obvious that there are some triggers here that we should be much better aware of than we are. Quite often what goes by the name of ethnic conflict is in fact something much more interesting, complex, diverse, and case specific, with more varied implications for policy than any distortive catch-all slogan such as "superpowers don't do windows" can cope with.

The State of the Academic Art

Now let us turn to the second topic I want to address: what we have learned from the literature, and what pertinent areas scholars have focused on. We should start by recognizing that no one has professed to come up with real "solutions" to ethnic conflict. We would be startled, I think, if they did,

[3] See John Hillen, "Superpowers Don't Do Windows," *Orbis*, Spring 1997, pp. 241–57.

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and in any case most "solutions" in foreign policy are just the preamble to the next set of problems. In that sense, most ethnic conflict is normal. It is natural when peoples come into contact and compete for scarce items like jobs, land, respect, or recognition that conflict will arise. And the conflict that must be worked out is usually more complex than the schoolyard struggle over who gets to use the red crayon. What is not natural, in my view, is genocidal violence. We must be very careful about the term ethnic conflict, because it does not equate to genocide. Ethnic conflict is something that needs to be managed and *can* be managed through various kinds of constitutional systems, military structures, and other remedies.

Likewise, internal warfare in general, and ethnic conflict in particular, is not equivalent to interstate war. Scholars have made considerable progress in pinpointing what makes internal strife more challenging and have identified some of the obstacles to resolution created by the circumstances of internal war. To begin with, many of the stakes involved are indivisible, rendering internal war a zero-sum game. Hence, security dilemmas involving trust—making military concessions or launching preemptive attacks—are even more thorny in an internal conflict than they would be in an interstate conflict, and many problems related to the conduct of disarmament and elections are very hard to resolve. Finally, there are problems created by so-called spoilers of settlements. Even when a negotiated outcome has been achieved in an ethnic conflict, people who are left out or just feel somewhat marginalized, and people who did not achieve their maximum or even minimum goals, will look for an opportunity to strike from the sidelines and undermine or sabotage an agreement. We have seen this happen in situations around the world when what we thought was a peace fell apart because some group, whether motivated by need, greed, or creed (in Bill Zartman's evocative words), remained unsatisfied.

An interesting debate continues among scholars concerning the extent to which ethnic conflicts are driven by the instrumental, or shall we say Machiavellian, tendencies and tactics of political leaders, rather than issuing from long-standing historical ancient hatreds and rivalries. We cannot resolve that debate, because it depends on the circumstances of the case. What needs fixing in the Balkans—Milosevic, the Serbs, or the history books of all the Balkan peoples? In Indonesia, are the regionalism and pressures for autonomy happening because of ancient hatreds and long-festering, previously suppressed regional tendencies, or are they a product of revulsion against Suharto and his family, or is it the case that Indonesia, a vast archipelago of 13,000 islands, is somehow an artificial creation, like the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the time has come for its artificiality to be exposed? These are the kinds of questions at the center of academic debates that are of particular salience to us as we try to understand ethnic conflict.

Another debate that goes on among scholars asks whether or not there is a single constitutional model that can be deployed to resolve some of these problems. Again, there is not—it all depends on the case. I simply do not believe that we can look at the writings of people as diverse as Eric Nordlinger,

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Donald Horowitz, Arend Lijphart, Milton Esman, Tim Sisk, and our own Bill Zartman and decide which one is right.[4]

Yet another growing body of scholarship focuses on the economic roots and triggers of ethnic conflict. This is an exciting and emerging field that relates to the "greed" dimension, as opposed to need and creed. I am referring to such people as Mark Duffield, Susan Woodward, David Shearer, Bill Reno, David Keen, and Mats Berdal.[5]

The main theme of their books is the criminalization of the economy in states that have forgotten how to govern or that no longer have the means to govern. In failing states or actually failed states, the government habitually distributes spoils and divides the opposition by offering different fiefdoms to different groups. That ultimately leads to the privatization of security itself in many parts of the transitional world and the Third World, leading to situations that are becoming more and more frightening in terms of the weakness of the center and the potential for conflict among rural warlords.

To make matters worse, this is a problem that can splash across borders. Consider the case of Sierra Leone and the involvement in that conflict of Guinea and Liberia, as well as more distant South Africans and Ukrainians. What is happening is a link-up between diamond dealers, arms merchants, and mercenaries who are no longer needed by their home states. The large private arms markets of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union enable the funneling, in a quite purposeful way, of diamonds out and arms in, thereby creating an open invitation to spreading ethnic conflict, not only within individual countries, but across borders and whole regions of the troubled African continent. The cutting edge of the literature endeavors to pull all these strands together.

[4] See Eric A. Nordlinger, *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1972); Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985); Arend Lijphart, "Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power-Sharing Systems," in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, ed. Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Milton J. Esman, *Ethnic Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994); Timothy D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); I. William Zartman, "Toward the Resolution of International Conflict," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), pp. 3–19.

[5] See Mark Duffield, "The Political Economics of Internal War: Asset Transfer, Complex Emergencies and International Aid," in *War and Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies*, ed. Joanna Macrae et al. (London: Zed Books, 1996); Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995); David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention*, Adelphi Paper #316 (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998); William Sampson Klock Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998); David Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper #320 (London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998); Mats Berdal and David Keen, "Violence and Economic Agendas in Civil Wars," *Millennium*, vol. 26, no. 3. (1997), pp. 804–5.

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Implications for American Foreign Policy

The examination of ethnic conflict has several implications for American foreign policy. First, it might be useful if we would think about the phenomenon we are dealing with—which is nothing less than the breakdown of empires, federations, and nation-states—before we act. We must think about how, in the present era, the breakdown of the old colonial and Cold War structures empowered challengers to governments. Whether their challenges come through information technology, the erection of new standards of governance, or new demands from donor clubs, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, a fundamental shift in the balance of power on the ground has occurred. The disappearance of the old structures has, in short, created strategic vacuums that will be filled, in one fashion or another, by a new set of actors or by older actors marching under new flags. That is really what much ethnic conflict is all about.

Secondly, we need to reflect on the stakes. As a superpower that supposedly "doesn't do windows," we may be tempted to think that the stakes are low for the United States. But what is at stake in Kosovo is not just the Albanians or Serbs. Now, what is at stake is American leadership, the survival of NATO, and the danger that members of the U.N. Security Council, including Russia and China, will acquire something of a veto over American policy—including how we get out of the woods we have wandered into.

Think, too, about the stakes involved for the people who become victims of these conflicts. Waiting for a conflict to "ripen" will achieve nothing if the contesting leadership elites are living off the conflict. When both sides in a conflict find the status quo preferable to any settlement, the situation will never "ripen" and the humanitarian toll will mount. And the numbers of victims of these conflicts is huge: up to four million in Sudan alone over the past forty years, and countless thousands in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Indonesia, and the Balkans. Similar conflicts have raged in the South Asian subcontinent since the massive postcolonial population transfers of the late 1940s, and now that nuclear weapons have been openly thrown into the mix, the Indo-Pakistani worst-case scenario has gotten a lot worse. So the stakes are huge in moral as well as strategic terms.

The third thing we need to do is begin relating means to ends. You would think this an essential requirement of any strategy. But if we do not get the resources and the goals in some kind of relationship to each other in American foreign policy, we are going to have more and more Kosovos to worry about. This may seem a fairly obvious point, another truism out of Washington, but perhaps because of our unique global standing, as well as our post–Cold War hubris, we sometimes behave as if the laws of gravity do not affect us. Contemporary experience to me suggests otherwise. When was it that Dayton became possible? Only when the Croatian army, assisted by some NATO air power, began really to roll back the Serbs—in other words, when the means began to relate to the ends we were seeking.

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Another conclusion about the implications for our policy is that we may need to think beyond mediated outcomes. Obviously, mediated outcomes are the best in some ways because they seem softer and more user-friendly. They imply an integrationist outcome after which peoples learn to live together peaceably. But is that really going to be possible in many of these situations? The ideal is already preemptive intervention to prevent bloodshed in the first place. Failing that, mediation works in certain cases, but not all that many. Failing that, in turn, we could become a bit more heartless and argue from history that the most stable outcomes are those that flow from an outright victory by one side. But do we really want to get into the business of looking at victory as a solution to ethnic conflicts? If we had done nothing in Kosovo, there would have been such a victory, and the Serbs would have produced an ephemeral stability. But that would hardly be an outcome to cheer.

We must be willing to accept casualties for interests that appear less than vital.

Other possible outcomes include negotiated separation, separation at gunpoint, forced population transfers, and military intervention to reverse victories we do not like. But none of these is very appealing either. So if we are not prepared to countenance what we are seeing out there, if we are worried about the track record of mediated approaches which are only effective in a minority of cases, if we are not good enough to do preemption, maybe we have to begin thinking a little bit more creatively about how to deal with problems of ethnic communities that simply show signs that they do not really want to live together. That is one area of thinking that needs additional reflection.

Another problem on which we need to reflect is the development of strategic traction on the ground. The way we Americans are thinking about war these days is deeply disturbing. We seem to believe that we can prepare for the wars that we want to fight while remaining ill equipped for, and uninterested in, the kinds of challenges we will most likely face. There is an asymmetry developing between our kind of strategy, which we are seeing played out night after night and day after day with the NATO bombing campaign, and the kind of strategy which the Milosevics of this world specialize in, which affects the people on the ground, in their towns, in their homes, in their villages. We must figure out how to get some strategic traction, which in turn means being willing to accept casualties for interests that may appear to be less than vital. This point is pretty obvious, but it has taken Kosovo to teach us that high-tech warfare cannot by itself stop ethnic cleansing and genocide, even if it may impose a heavy price on the perpetrators. Overwhelming local force applied to the circumstances on the ground makes an indispensable difference, and at an acceptable cost.

Finally, we must find ways to target the people who exploit these conflicts for their own economic gain. There has been much talk about economic sanctions and how they are overdone by the United States. According to one measure, we have imposed sanctions on more than sixty different countries. The problem is that those sanctions apply to countries rather than to individuals.

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We now know enough about the way financial transfers work to target the bank accounts of individuals and to find and break criminal business enterprises. But we are not doing it, even though these are the very actors who actively tear apart country after country.

Conclusion

Ethnic conflict is a complex phenomenon. There is no single cookie-cutter approach that will work. Dramatic differences exist between the circumstances of a Bulgaria or Kosovo on the one hand and an Indonesia on the other. Or take the case of Ireland. What accounts for the fact that the Irish conflict looks closer and closer to being finally resolved? There are some special ingredients there, as in every case. The long learning process, the empowerment of civil society, the role of churches in building bridges, and the role of third parties in Ireland make it an exciting example. There is also a combination of important nations such as the United Kingdom, United States, and Republic of Ireland, as well as the European Union coming together and in effect strengthening those parties that want peace and marginalizing the parties that do not want peace. Yet even with all these assets it is not easy.

In conclusion, ethnic conflict is a case-by-case story. I know that sounds likes a Washington answer, but I do not believe in any abstract theory of ethnic conflict. There is no substitute for knowing the facts of the case and the range of tools and instruments available to you. Above all, you must make an act of will, and be *determined* if you are to be effective.

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Conservative Opinions on U.S. Foreign Policy

by Michael P. Noonan

Since the end of the Cold War, American politics have hinged for the most part on domestic issues, while foreign and national security issues have been, at best, an occasional distraction. Even the recent war over Kosovo failed to electrify public opinion or elicit strong responses from Capitol Hill. What is more, the once familiar political coalitions that characterized the debate over American foreign and defense policies have all but dissolved, with the result that "strange bedfellows" find themselves in agreement on such issues as relations with China, NATO expansion, and how much the nation should spend on defense. So it is that conservative pundit and presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan and liberal House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), for instance, both oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), advocate tougher restrictions on immigration, and denounce the Clinton administration's accommodation of Beijing. Such apparent paradoxes are not at all new in U.S. diplomatic history, however. President Reagan's foreign policy itself brought together an odd coalition of supporters, composed of fiscal and cultural conservatives, neoconservatives, Kissingerian realists, and centrists of both parties. To be sure, the cresting Soviet power of the late 1970s was the driving catalyst for that alliance, while the lack of a hegemonic international threat today helps to explain the absence of a strong internationalist consensus. The result has been that a Democratic administration has escaped strong opposition at home despite apparent blunders and reversals of course in foreign policy, while Republicans have been incapable of rallying around alternative conceptions of America's proper role in the world. In late 1996, for instance, *Foreign Affairs* published two competing "conservative" foreign and defense policy directions for the Republican Party.[1] The initial article by William Kristol

[1] William Kristol and Robert Kagan, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, July/Aug. 1996, pp. 18–32; and Kim R. Holmes and John Hillen, "Misreading Reagan's Legacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 1996, pp. 162–67.

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and Robert Kagan, both neoconservatives, argued for an expansive vision of American foreign and defense policy, while the response by Kim Holmes and John Hillen, both conservatives, offered a more modest, yet assertive, position. Since these two articles appeared, the debate within conservative foreign and defense policy circles has, if anything, intensified.[2] The recent events in Kosovo only sharpened the rhetorical battle lines, as conservatives in support of armed intervention against Yugoslavia were either heralded as muscular humanitarians or derided as crusaders, and those opposed either lauded as wise men or ridiculed as isolationists.[3] Can self-styled conservatives hammer out a coherent foreign policy platform in advance of the presidential election? If so, will it matter?

A Conservative Straw Poll

Two assumptions inspired a serious sounding of various "conservative" opinions on foreign policy. The first is that a significant, if not decisive, bloc of voters is concerned with the damage allegedly done to U.S. military preparedness, prestige, and national interest over the past seven years, and that foreign policy will therefore be an issue in the 2000 campaign. The second is that conservative opinions may have important ramifications for future U.S. foreign and defense policy should the Republicans win the White House. Thus, while many surveys measure elite opinion in general towards American foreign policy,[4] what has been lacking is a statistical analysis designed to display just how fractured conservatives are on issues of America's post–Cold War role in the world.

The data were collected via a questionnaire designed using the "non-probability sample" method, with the sample of conservative opinion leaders drawn from the Heritage Foundation's *Guide to Public Policy Experts, 1997–1998*.[5] Two areas of expertise specified in the guide are "National Security" and "Foreign Policy," and under those rubrics fall 389 experts associated with a wide variety of institutions. While the list does not include every key conservative policy analyst and commentator, the members it does include are all significant

[2] See, for example, Walter A. McDougall, "Editor's Column," *Orbis*, Winter 1998, pp. 2–6; Lawrence F. Kaplan, "Leftism on the Right," *The Weekly Standard*, Feb. 9, 1998, pp. 27–29; Harvey Sicherman, "Correspondence: On American Power," *The Weekly Standard*, Feb. 16, 1998, p. 7; and Gary Bauer, "A Conservative View of American Foreign Policy," Institute of Politics Forum, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., Apr. 13, 1998.

[3] For a brief summary of this debate, see Fareed Zakaria, "Conservative Confusion on Kosovo," *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 14, 1999.

[4] The premier example of this type of survey remains John E. Rielly, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1999* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1999). The Chicago Council releases this survey every four years, and its findings include the opinions of both the public and elites.

[5] Thomas C. Atwood, ed., *The Guide to Public Policy Experts, 1997–1998* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1997).

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Table 1
Issue Importance As Measured against Political Self-Identification

	Social/Cultural	Fiscal/Economic	Foreign/Military	Percent of Sample
Conservative	34.5%	17.2%	48.3%	53.0
Neoconservative	46.9	9.4	43.8	19.5
Centrist	8.7	8.7	82.6	14.0
Libertarian	18.2	50.0	31.8	13.5
Average Overall	31.1	18.9	50.0	——

"players" in public debate and comprise a representative sample of conservative views.

Of the 380 experts polled, fully 164 returned completed questionnaires, for a response rate of 43.2 percent. (The typical response rate for a mail survey is between 20 and 40 percent.) Several facts became immediately clear: Conservative opinion *leaders* (as opposed to voters in general) are overwhelmingly well educated, male, and over the age of forty-six. Among them are also a disproportionate number of military veterans. Next, those defining themselves simply as conservative composed over half the sample (53 percent), while almost a fifth described themselves as neoconservatives (19.5 percent), followed by self-described centrists and classical liberals/libertarians, with 14 and 13.5 percent representation, respectively.

Asked to rank the issue area of most importance to them, exactly half responded that foreign affairs and defense issues mattered most. Social and cultural issues came in second with 31.1 percent of the sample, and only 18.9 percent responded that fiscal and economic issues were their highest priority. (See Table 1.)

Portrait of the Conservative Punditry

Almost half of the nation's conservative foreign policy and defense analysts hold academic positions (45.1 percent). Constituting the second-largest occupation cohort among those surveyed were the independent policy analysts (16.5 percent), followed by business executives (14.6 percent), consultants (10.4 percent), journalists/editors (5.5 percent), and others, including retirees (7.9 percent). Over a third (37.2 percent) of respondents worked and resided in the greater Washington, D.C., area, but the remainder were surprisingly evenly distributed, with 22 percent based in the West, followed by the Northeast (17.1 percent), Midwest (12.2 percent), and South (11.6 percent). In terms of age, fully 34.8 percent were 65 or older, 23.2 percent between the ages of 56 and 65, 25 percent between 45 and 55, 11.6 percent between 36 and 45, and only 5.5 percent between 21 and 35. As stated above, the sample was overwhelmingly male. Of the 164 who filed the questionnaire only five (3.7 percent) were

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women. In terms of education, the vast majority (90.9 percent) of the sample held postgraduate degrees, and over two-thirds had taken doctorates. Another 8.5 percent held professional degrees (M.D., J.D., M.B.A., and the like), and only two people in the entire sample lacked a bachelor's degree. Finally, over half of respondents (50.6 percent) had prior military service. Of these, 62.6 percent served in the army or army reserves, followed by the navy and naval reserves (18.1 percent), the air force and its reserves (16.8 percent), and the Marine Corps (2.4 percent). Of those with prior military service, 59 percent served as commissioned officers, including 8.4 percent who held general or flag rank (generals and admirals), and 18.1 percent who left the service at a field grade (colonels, majors, and navy captains and commanders).

In sum, the numbers glaringly demonstrate that conservative foreign policy and defense analysis is a highly unrepresentative profession in contemporary America, dominated as it still is by "old, white males" with military experience and high educational attainments. Such an elite could not make a more stark contrast with the personnel staffing the highest and, indeed, lower levels of the Clinton administration's foreign policy team.

Foreign Policy and American Leadership

How did this elite respond to the twenty-two questions relating to American foreign policy? Table 2 presents the aggregate results.

American International Leadership. While much debate occurs in the pages of policy journals, magazines, and newspapers between advocates of a more or less assertive U.S. foreign policy posture, the sample showed a strong degree of support for continued American leadership abroad. When asked for their opinion on whether the United States should retain its primary leadership position in the international community after the Cold War, 85.4 percent either strongly agreed or agreed. The groups that showed the most support for this position were neoconservatives (93.8 percent) and conservatives (88.5 percent), followed by the centrists (78.2 percent) and libertarians (68.2 percent). Asked instead whether the end of the Cold War "now allows" the United States to disengage from its position as an international leader, 76.9 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed, with neoconservatives and conservatives again leading the way. Clearly the charge that neo-isolationism is rife on the Right is a spurious one.

Another important area of debate is the degree to which the United States should act unilaterally or in concert with other nations to resolve international problems. Hence, respondents were asked whether "the United States should always seek to resolve international problems multilaterally." A majority (64.7 percent) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement. Conservatives showed the highest extent of disagreement (71.2 percent), followed by libertarians (63.6 percent) and neoconservatives (62.6 percent). Centrists were curiously divided over this issue, with 39.1 percent in agreement and 43.1 percent opposed. Likewise, when asked whether the United

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Table 2: Foreign Policy Attitudes

	SA	A	N	D	SD
In the post-Cold War era the United States should retain its primary leadership position in the international community.	56.7%	28.7%	9.8%	4.3%	0.6%
The end of the Cold War now allows the United States to disengage from its position as an international leader.	3.7	7.9	11.6	35.4	41.5
The United States should always seek to resolve international problems multilaterally.	4.9	15.9	14.6	40.9	23.8
The United States should act unilaterally when necessary to resolve international problems.	33.5	34.8	16.5	13.4	1.8
The promotion of human rights abroad should be a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy.	7.9	34.1	29.3	23.2	5.5
Economic sanctions are an effective and useful tool of American diplomacy.	1.8	23.2	23.8	35.4	15.9
Promotion of free markets abroad should be a central feature of U.S. foreign policy.	38.4	47.0	10.4	3.7	0.6
Free trade agreements such as NAFTA and GATT have helped America's economic position in the world.	38.4	42.1	9.8	6.1	3.7
American markets are too open to competition from foreign goods and services.	3.7	13.4	12.8	42.7	27.4
The current round of NATO expansion will help to promote American and European security.	18.9	32.3	16.5	26.2	6.1
It is in the U.S. national interest for a friendly government to remain in power in Russia.	52.4	44.5	3.0	0.0	0.0
The United States should take all means necessary to ensure a friendly regime in Russia.	16.5	38.4	22.6	18.3	4.3
The current U.S. policy of dual containment towards Iran and Iraq has been largely ineffectual.	17.1	44.5	17.7	19.5	1.2
In the future, sub-Saharan Africa will remain a region of marginal importance to U.S. national interests.	14.0	53.7	14.0	15.9	2.4

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree N=Neutral D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree

U.S. spending on foreign aid programs, currently about $13 billion annually, is: *too little* 14.6 *about right* 37.2 *too much* 48.2

The degree of focus that U.S. diplomacy places on the Middle East peace process is: *too little* 11.6 *about right* 43.9 *too much* 44.5

U.S. efforts to "enlarge" democracies internationally have been: *successful* 29.3 *rarely successful* 43.3 *neutral* 19.5 *unsuccessful* 7.9

The U.S. diplomatic position toward China should be one of: *containment* 28.0 *friendly cooperation* 9.1 *constructive engagement* 62.8

The United States should promote its values abroad primarily through:

rhetoric and example 46.3 *sanctions and intervention* 4.3 *trade and finance* 30.5 *all three* 11.6

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States "should act unilaterally when necessary to resolve international problems," a considerable majority (68.3 percent) agreed or agreed strongly that the United States must maintain the freedom of action to act alone when necessary.

Values and Diplomacy. For what purposes should the United States act—and lead—internationally: in defense of clear national interests only, or in pursuit of "enlargement" of democracy, human rights, market economies, and other American values? Asked their opinions about U.S. efforts to promote democracy abroad, only 29.3 percent of the sample believed such endeavors had been successful. A plurality (43.3 percent) reported that such efforts have been rarely, if somewhat, successful, while the remainder believed that such efforts have had no particular impact (19.5 percent) or been positively unsuccessful (7.9 percent). As one would suspect, neoconservatives (46.9 percent) were more sanguine about the success of efforts to spread democracy than were conservatives (29.9 percent), centrists (17.4 percent), or libertarians (13.6 percent).

The charge that neo-isolationism is rife on the Right is a spurious one.

The promotion of human rights abroad, the effectiveness of economic sanctions, and U.S. spending on foreign aid are also hot topics today, and the data show a considerable difference of opinion between the neoconservatives and the other three groups of respondents. Asked whether the promotion of human rights abroad should be a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, only 42 percent strongly agreed or agreed that it should, but 59.4 percent of neoconservatives held this position, compared to 40.9 percent of libertarians, 39.1 percent of centrists, and 37.9 percent of conservatives. On the issue of whether economic sanctions are an effective and useful tool of American diplomacy, 51.3 percent of the sample stated that they were not, but whereas majorities of libertarians (63.7 percent), centrists (60.8 percent), and conservatives (54 percent) were skeptical about sanctions, only a minority of neoconservatives (28.1 percent) were.

Economic Issues. The amount of money that the United States dispenses in foreign aid is an especially divisive issue today in American politics, and numerous surveys show that the public believes that the United States spends too much on foreign aid.[6] The problem with such surveys, however, is that the public consistently overestimates the amount of aid given to other nations and, when asked for a number, seems willing to spend more on aid programs than is actually spent. In order to correct for this problem, the questionnaire provided respondents with the real dollar amount (approximately $13 billion) that the United States spent last year on foreign aid programs. Armed with this information, 48.2 percent of them still felt that the United States spends too much on such programs, with libertarians (86.4 percent) and conservatives (51.7 percent) most opposed to foreign assistance, but most neoconservatives (59.4 percent) content with the current amount of funding.

Does skepticism about foreign aid suggest that many conservatives are tempted to adopt a more "isolationist" economic position? Not at all, it seems. When asked whether the promotion of free markets should be a central tenet

[6] See, for example, Rielly, *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1999.*

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of American foreign policy, 85.4 percent of the sample answered yes. When asked whether free trade agreements such as NAFTA and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had helped America's economic position in the world, 80.5 percent agreed that they had. Finally, when asked whether American markets were too open to foreign competition, 70.1 percent answered no. What is more, the responses of all four groups were similar in regard to these questions, with only the libertarians being even more in favor of free trade than the others.

Regional Issues. The last topic relating to foreign policy and American leadership concerned the importance of various regions to U.S. interests and security, including Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, and China. First, the questionnaire asked for reactions to the statement that "the current round of NATO expansion will help to promote American and European security." Over half (51.2 percent) strongly agreed or agreed that NATO expansion would improve Western security, with fairly uniform support from all groups. Furthermore, of those who agreed that the current round of expansion promoted European and American security, almost two-thirds (65.5 percent) supported a second round of expansion.

Concerning U.S. relations with Russia, 96.9 percent agreed that it was in the national interest for a friendly regime to remain in power in Moscow. But when presented with the statement that "the United States should take all means necessary to ensure a friendly regime in Russia," only 54.9 percent of the sample agreed or strongly agreed, with no sharp divergence among the four groups. A large number of conservatives evidently believe either that it is not in the power of the Western states to "ensure" a pacific Russian evolution or that the cost would be exorbitant.

Regarding U.S. relations with the People's Republic of China, a majority of respondents affirmed "constructive engagement" (62.8 percent), with centrists (91.3 percent) most in favor of this option and conservatives (52.9 percent) least approving. The second most popular option was containment of the PRC (28 percent, including 35.6 percent of conservatives), followed by friendly cooperation (9.1 percent, including 18.2 percent of libertarians). For all their well-justified criticism of the Clinton administration's flip-flops on China, therefore, it would appear that conservatives would be hardly more able to construct a consensus on the subject. Nevertheless, the poll also showed that conservatives believe that China, and Asian issues in general, will only grow in importance for the United States, as indicated by their ranking of the regions they believe most important for American foreign policy today and in the year 2010. The respondents ranked East Asia, Western Europe, and Latin America as the first, second, and third most important regions of the world both in 1999 and in the year 2010. However, East Asia received a 13.4 percent increase in importance over that time. (See Table 3.)

Military Posture and the Use of Force

Respondents were asked twenty-three questions about national security policy, including strategy, use of force, military spending, force structure,

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Table 3
Which region is, or will be, most important to American foreign policy?

Today		2010	
East Asia	35.4%	East Asia	48.8%
Western Europe	25.0	Western Europe	14.6
Latin America	9.8	Latin America	10.4
North America	8.5	Eastern Europe/Central Asia	8.5
North Africa/Middle East	7.3	North America	7.9
Central Europe	6.1	North Africa/Middle East	4.3
Eastern Europe/Central Asia	6.1	South Asia	4.3
South Asia	1.8	Central Europe	1.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.0	Sub-Saharan Africa	0.0

technology and the future, the military and society, intelligence, and the threat environment. (See Table 4.) In this case, differences among the four conservative subgroups were considerable, but curiously, no significant differences of opinion existed between those who had served in the armed forces and those who had not.

Defense Strategy. First, exactly half of the respondents denied or strongly denied that the current "two major regional contingencies" (MRC) strategy was viable given current U.S. force structure and capabilities. Pressed further on this issue, the sample was asked whether or not the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) released by Defense Secretary William Cohen in 1997 was a forward-looking strategy insofar as it maintained the two MRC standard. A plurality (45.2 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement, with conservatives most opposed (60.9 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed) and neoconservatives fairly evenly split (28.1 percent affirmed the QDR and 25 percent did not).

What, in the post–Cold War era, should be the major function of the armed forces: deterrence and warfighting, or peacemaking and peacekeeping missions? Asked whether deterrence and warfighting should remain the central missions of the U.S. military, fully 82.9 percent said that they should, with neoconservatives and conservatives in strong agreement (87.5 percent and 87.3 percent, respectively). Turning the issue around, the survey asked whether peacekeeping operations should be a central mission of the U.S. military after the Cold War. In response to that statement, 67.1 percent said that it should *not* be a central mission, with conservatives most fervently opposed (79.3 percent), followed by libertarians (68.1 percent), centrists (52.1 percent), and neoconservatives (43.8 percent).

The Use of Force. Debate over when, and what sort of force, ought to be used in pursuit of U.S. policy inevitably centers on the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, which states that American forces should seek quick, decisive battlefield victories while minimizing the possibility of U.S. casualties. When asked whether this doctrine is a useful litmus test for deploying our armed forces, a slight plurality (40.9 percent) of respondents said that it is. But whereas 65.2 percent

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Table 4: Defense Strategy and Posture

	SA	A	N	D	SD
The current U.S. defense strategy of fighting two near-simultaneous major regional contingencies is a credible defense policy.	7.3	26.8	15.9	39.0	11.0
Defense Secretary William Cohen's Quadrennial Defense Review is a forward-looking strategy for preparing America's military for the twenty-first century.	0.6	14.0	40.2	34.8	10.4
Deterrence and warfighting should be the central missions of the U.S. military after the Cold War.	40.2	42.7	7.9	6.7	2.4
Peacekeeping should be a central mission of the U.S. military after the Cold War.	0.0	15.9	17.1	43.9	23.2
Today the threat or use of American military power is more important than it was during the Cold War.	3.7	16.5	33.5	40.9	6.7
The Weinberger/Powell Doctrine is a useful litmus test for determining when the U.S. should use military force.	4.9	36.0	39.0	15.2	4.9
The use of air power should always be the first response when application of U.S. military power is necessary.	2.4	15.2	34.8	40.9	6.7
The probability of American casualties should always be a central consideration in any decision on the use of U.S. force.	4.9	33.5	17.1	37.8	6.7
The U.S. military should stay in Bosnia-Herzegovina for as long as necessary in order to maintain peace.	2.4	15.2	14.6	40.9	26.8
Currently, budgetary considerations unduly determine America's defense strategy.	19.5	42.1	22.6	13.4	2.4
In the future, technological innovation will allow the size of the U.S. armed forces to shrink without denigrating military capabilities.	4.9	32.9	22.0	35.4	4.9
The development of a national missile defense system will be vital for U.S. security in the 21st century.	54.3	29.3	7.3	7.9	1.2
The B-2 Stealth Bomber contributes significantly to U.S. military capabilities.	6.7	40.2	31.7	18.3	3.0
The Seawolf attack submarine contributes significantly to U.S. military capabilities.	4.9	42.1	39.6	11.0	2.4
Today America's uniformed military and its civilian leadership have a healthy relationship.	1.2	23.8	20.1	40.9	14.0
The American military must maintain a culture different from that of the society it protects.	24.4	39.6	15.2	18.9	1.8
The U.S. intelligence community should play an expanded role in American defense today and in the future.	23.8	47.0	15.9	11.6	1.8
Today, the U.S. places too much emphasis on technological rather than human intelligence gathering.	10.4	51.8	24.4	11.0	2.4

SA=Strongly Agree A=Agree N=Neutral D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree (percentage of respondents)

	Too Little	About the Right Amount	Too Much
Since the end of the Cold War the U.S. military has shrunk _____.	10.4	27.4	62.2
Today, the United States spends _____ on national defense.	64.6	26.2	9.1

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of centrists and 43.6 percent of conservatives agreed with this proposition, only 18.8 percent of neoconservatives did so.

Follow-on questions asked about the application of air power and Americans' willingness to accept casualties. When presented with the statement that "the use of air power should always be the first response when the application of U.S. military power is necessary," a strong plurality (47.6 percent) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, with the distribution fairly steady across all four groups. Asked whether the probability of American casualties should always be a central consideration in any decision to deploy, only 44.5 percent said that the fear of casualties should *not* drive decisions to intervene, including 62.5 percent of neoconservatives. By contrast, 62.5 percent of libertarians felt casualties *should* be a central consideration.

When asked whether U.S. forces should remain in Bosnia for as long as necessary to maintain peace in the region, a majority (67.7 percent) said no. But once again, conservatives (74.7 percent), libertarians (72.7 percent), and centrists (65.2 percent) were united in their opposition, whereas only 46.9 percent of neoconservatives opposed open-ended commitments to the Balkans.

Military Spending and Force Structure. In the post–Cold War era, much debate surrounds the size of the armed forces and defense budget. Asked whether the United States spends "too little," "about the right amount," or "too much" on national defense, 64.6 percent of respondents answered that current defense spending is inadequate, but opinion varied widely among conservatives (81.6 percent), neoconservatives (56.3 percent), and centrists (43.5 percent), while a plurality of libertarians (36.4 percent) felt that *too much* is spent on defense. Of those who favor an increased defense budget, 50.8 percent called for an annual budget in the range of $251–275 billion, 26.2 percent for $276–300 billion, and 23 percent for a budget in excess of $300 billion.

Another question asked whether "budgetary considerations unduly determine America's defense strategy." More than three of five respondents (61.6 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, and only 15.8 percent disagreed. When asked whether the U.S. force structure had shrunk "too little," "about the right amount," or "too much" since the end of the Cold War, 62.2 percent of those surveyed believe the military has shrunk too much, led by conservatives (77 percent) and neoconservatives (59.4 percent), with many libertarians again believing that America's forces have not shrunk enough.

Technology and the Future. What role should technology play on the future battlefield and in the defense of the United States? When presented with the statement that "in the future technological innovation will allow the size of the U.S. armed forces to shrink without denigrating military capabilities," a slight plurality (40.3 percent) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. But whereas 49.4 percent of conservatives disagreed with the statement, most libertarians (63.7 percent) and many centrists (47.8 percent) and neoconservatives (40.6 percent) believe that technological innovation will increase battlefield capability and allow for smaller forces. It would seem contradictory, therefore, that the most ardent defenders of the B-2 bomber and Seawolf attack submarine were the conservatives, with 57.4 and 56.3 percent in support, respectively.

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When asked whether ballistic missile defense will be vital for American security in the twenty-first century, 83.5 percent of those surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed, including 90.8 percent of conservatives, 87.6 percent of neoconservatives, and even 81.9 percent of libertarians. Only the centrists were divided on the issue (52.1 percent in favor, 34.7 percent opposed).

Military and Society. Two much-debated topics in defense policy relate to American civil-military relations and the culture(s) of our armed forces. When asked whether the uniformed military had a healthy relationship with their civilian leadership, 54.9 percent said that this was not the case, although conservatives (68.9 percent) and libertarians (54.6 percent) may hold that opinion for opposite reasons. Of neoconservatives, 40.6 percent said that healthy relations do exist. Similarly, when presented with the statement that "the American military must maintain a culture that is different from that of the society which it protects," 64 percent of those surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed. Unlike the issue of civil-military relations, however, majorities of conservatives (73.5 percent), neoconservatives (59.4 percent), and libertarians (54.6 percent), and a plurality of centrists (43.4 percent) felt that a distinct military culture was necessary. These findings are interesting because they show that, while a majority of the survey members believe that civil-military relations in the United States are currently unhealthy, they also see the military as an institution that needs to preserve a distinctive ethos.

The Intelligence Community. Another contentious issue is the role of the intelligence community, especially given its recent failure to detect India's and Pakistan's nuclear tests, its errors in the Yugoslav war, and the Chinese espionage scandal. When presented with the statement that "the U.S. intelligence community should play an expanded role in American defense today and in the future," a full 70.8 percent of the sample agreed or strongly agreed. This time, neoconservatives (81.2 percent) showed the greatest support, followed by conservatives (74.7 percent), centrists (60.9 percent), and libertarians (50 percent). Asked whether the United States places too much emphasis on technological gathering of intelligence as opposed to human agency, a majority (62.2 percent) felt that such an overemphasis does exist, with conservatives (72.4 percent) most fervent in this opinion, followed by centrists (56.5 percent), neoconservatives (53.2 percent), and libertarians (40.9 percent).

International Threat Environment. Given a selection of fourteen possible choices, respondents were asked to rank the five biggest threats to contemporary and future American security.[7] (See Table 5.) As the numbers show, the spread of weapons of mass destruction is the issue that most concerns the sample both today and in the future, with the potential increase in Chinese power showing the largest rate of change over time.

[7] For these questions the author weight-measured the responses so that they yielded a weighted percentage of what individuals felt were the greatest threats. For each threat that was assessed as a "1" a numerical value of 5 was assigned, for a "2" 4 points, for a "3" 3 points, for a "4" 2 points, and for a "5" 1 point. The cumulative totals for each threat were then tallied and divided by 2460 (the total possible number of points).

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Table 5
Level of Concern for Threats to Current and Future American Security

Today		2010	
Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction	18.6%	Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction	16.3%
Rogue states	12.8	Hegemonic China	14.1
International terrorism	11.3	Rogue states	10.6
Hegemonic China	9.7	International terrorism	10.0
American disengagement from international leadership	9.5	American disengagement from international leadership	9.0
International economic issues	7.7	International economic issues	8.9
Fundamentalist Islam	6.4	Resurgent Russia	7.0
Resurgent Russia	6.4	Fundamentalist Islam	6.3
Drug trafficking	5.7	Drug trafficking	4.6
Failing states/ethnic conflict	3.8	Failing states/ethnic conflict	3.7
Transnational organized crime	3.4	Transnational organized crime	3.4
Information warfare	1.7	Information warfare	2.5
Environmental degradation	1.6	Environmental degradation	2.0
Other	1.4	Other	1.6

A "Conservative" Foreign Policy for the Next Millennium?

The poll data demonstrate that lines of consensus and dissensus exist among the factions that compose the conservative foreign policy elite. But the four factions are of various importance, with self-styled conservatives and neoconservatives far more numerous (and more influential) on foreign and defense issues than the amorphous centrists and economics-minded libertarians. What is more, conservatives and neoconservatives display a clear divergence regarding the issues that have defined the post–Cold War era: the promotion of values rather than interests, and the promiscuous use of American force overseas. That said, the data also reveal strong majorities in all four groups that may well comprise a consensus around seven salient issues, any or all of which might resonate with conservative-minded voters in the year 2000. Those seven points of consensus are that the United States must: (1) remain an international leader; (2) act unilaterally when necessary; (3) promote free trade and free markets; (4) spend marginally more on defense; (5) maintain a warfighting ethos in its armed forces; (6) develop a national ballistic missile defense; and (7) increase the capabilities of its intelligence community.

Depending on contingencies abroad, foreign policy may or may not emerge as a "wedge" in the 2000 campaign. But insofar as conservatives of all persuasions desire to present a united front and a coherent alternative to the Clinton legacy, the issues above would seem to offer the best raw material.

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Review Essays

The Best and the Brightest Return

by Harvey Sicherman

In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era. By Warren Christopher. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998. 586 pp. $60; $22.95, paper.)

To End a War. By Richard Holbrooke. (New York: Random House, 1998. 408 pp. $27.95.)

A bizarre epiphany overtook the Clinton administration in spring 1999 when the president found his vocation in the war against Slobodan Milosevic. This initiative was a complete reversal of everything preached by the Clintonians: the focus on economics in foreign policy, the denigration of military force in the age of the Internet, and the emphasis on U.N.-style multilateralism. Instead, Bill Clinton bounced from the nadir of impeachment into the lofty role of generalissimo, leading an old-fashioned military alliance against an even more old fashioned Balkan dictator, who needed only a Hapsburg-era uniform to complete his pre-1914 image.

How and why did this happen? Those in search of answers will find some of them in the books by Warren Christopher, Clinton's first secretary of state, and Richard Holbrooke, architect of the Dayton accords and U.N. ambassador-designate. It should be said at the outset that these are two very different works. Christopher tries to tell his story through the medium of his official addresses. Holbrooke has written a more classic (if not classical) play: hero confronts crisis and succeeds after much derring-do. Christopher and Holbrooke also paint as good a portrait as we are likely to get of a Clinton foreign policy still in mutation.

By His Speeches Shall We Know Him

We are clearly at an unusual stage in our intellectual life when a former secretary of state is so bold as to expect that thirty-seven of his best unremembered

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speeches would be widely read. Yet here we have a very handsome volume of official prose, prepared with Warren Christopher's fabled care and introduced by a paean of praise for both the art of speechwriting and his unsung speechwriters. I must confess that as a former speechwriter myself, this show of appreciation was high flattery by inference and quite disarmed me. It is by far the best part of the book.

Christopher took a lot of time with his speeches, and for good reason. As he explains, official speeches serve more than one vital purpose. They inform the audience, local and worldwide, but also act as a spur to the often jackass-like policy process. Nothing concentrates the mind of a policymaker like a major public speech only a fortnight away. But even this incentive does not always suffice, and sometimes the poor speechwriter is left to weave a rhetorical veil disguising the very absence of policy.

Speeches can thus be as suspect as official memoirs, telling us only what the orator and author would like us to think. Christopher's are no exception, portraying an unbroken march of success. Only the scene-setting prefaces to each speech offer additional illumination of Christopher's policy views.

An evaluation of Christopher's book also requires an understanding of the secretary of state's special role. This important official, fourth in line in the American constitutional succession, is uniquely dependent on presidential favor. As the head of a small, chronically underfunded department, the secretary often finds himself pitted against other political, economic, and military interests in disputes that can only be adjudicated by the president himself. Moreover, the secretary almost always brings bad news in the form of urgent requests for the use of scarce White House political capital.

This unhappy post, so ripe for tragicomedy, is complicated further by presidential proclivities. Presidents fascinated with foreign affairs are often their own secretaries of state; presidents bored with them avoid issues the secretary brings to his attention. Successful pairings are those that couple the strengths of each personality and intellect. The most influential secretaries have been those able to articulate, advocate, execute, and above all reflect the will of their presidents, even if they themselves have helped to shape that will. Thus, a secretary of state's memoirs tell us not only about himself but also his chief. Reading Acheson, one learns of Truman; reading Kissinger, one learns of Nixon and Ford; reading Haig or Shultz, one learns of Reagan; and reading Baker, one learns of Bush.

Christopher the Best

In the Stream of History tells us first about Warren Christopher. Here, there are no surprises, reaffirming the public impression of a careful professional. Richard Holbrooke describes him at "his most typical and best—the skilled lawyer drafting an agreement" (Holbrooke, p. 264). Indeed, lawyerly prudence seems to have been Christopher's trademark. His earlier stint in the State

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Department, as a deputy to Cyrus Vance, had been distinguished by his patient negotiation of the Iran hostage deal in the last year of the Carter administration.

In a cabinet stocked with lawyers (nine of fourteen appointees; "as diverse as America," boasted the president—or as diverse as the American Bar, at least), Christopher brought two special attributes. He was a grey eminence, a father figure walking calmly through a voluble and excitable crowd of young and inexperienced enthusiasts. His stature was reassuring both inside and outside of the administration. More significant was his style, almost a caricature by contrast to the unabashed self-esteem of some of his predecessors. As Christopher once put it: "I always thought that I would do things in a conservative way to maximize the progressiveness of my policy positions. . . . If you are courteous and prudent, you can advance causes and advance ideas that would be unacceptable to others."[1]

The suppressed Christopher ego protected him from jealousy in the White House. Indeed, he is at pains to point out his close relationship to the president and admiration for Clinton's energy and endurance. Some of these words now make for embarrassing reading, for instance, when Christopher praises Clinton for withstanding "scurrilous" press reports during the 1992 presidential primaries (the Gennifer Flowers story)—reports which, as his book went to press, were not only confirmed, but surpassed by the Lewinsky scandal. Clearly, Christopher was an important early Clinton patron, especially in the critical state of California, where he had a wide political acquaintanceship. Clinton, in turn, relied on him for the all-important vice-presidential search process. This element of trust carried over when he became secretary of state.

A secretary at ease with his president always impresses the State Department. But another Christopher attribute also gained him a good deal of respect in Foggy Bottom. That font of verbal promiscuity found "Chris," as he was known to intimates, refreshingly monogamous, even celibate. Finally, there was his scrupulous sense of fair play and his judicious demeanor. Christopher might make mistakes, but they would never be charged up to loose talk, sloth, vanity, or zeal.

"Bold New Thinking"

Christopher was thus the very model of the "responsible liberal" that he describes as his political ideal. He brought to his task both the confidence of a president otherwise preoccupied with domestic issues and a style popular with his subordinates. Thanks to the Bush administration, Christopher also inherited the strongest U.S. international position in modern times, with no rival superpower in sight, former adversaries clamoring for American patronage, and

[1] Quoted in Warren Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (New York: Times Books, 1996), pp. 151–53.

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the prestige of victorious American arms from the Persian Gulf War—all of which he describes modestly as a "solid foundation."

What to build on this foundation? Christopher's early speeches manifest his understanding that a new era called for "bold new thinking." He also saw a list of pesky leftovers, such as Iraq, Bosnia, and Somalia. He wanted more U.S. support for Russia and a harder push for human rights and the environment. There was a need for new "structure."

But there would be no "Christopher Doctrine" to pull all of it together, no reach for a new system on the order of containment, no new slogan to define the post–Cold War era. Christopher writes of his dislike for "abstracts." Observers noted that he found even policy planning a difficult concept and soon reduced a staff that had been an intellectual powerhouse under Baker into a speechwriters' coven. By his own test, his new thinking would be judged "not by theoretical elegance but by its results" (p. 19).

It is cruel, of course, to revisit a statesman's initial ideas, which, as Helmuth von Moltke remarked of battle plans, hardly ever survive contact with the enemy. But Christopher's notions exhibited a surprising boldness in their almost studied lack of realism about what his department could do. At his confirmation hearing, the secretary of state's maiden rhetorical voyage, Christopher tried to describe a policy based on three "pillars." The first, the importance of the economic dimensions of security, aligned him with Clinton's "It's the economy, stupid" approach. The second asserted his understanding that "the discreet and careful use of force in certain circumstances—and its credible threat in general—will be essential to the success of our diplomacy and foreign policy." The third committed the United States to support "the global revolution for democracy," a "strategic approach" that coordinated "all of our leverage" (pp. 27–28). To these pillars Christopher added the need to cultivate the support of the American people. He joked that the State Department needed an "America Desk" (p. 25). He certainly wanted greater resources.

These ideas arguably cast the State Department in roles it could not perform. The secretary of state had rarely been a major player in setting economic policy: the Treasury outweighed it, the Special Trade Negotiator had a more coherent agenda, Commerce had more bureaucrats. Christopher could not even protect his own budget, which steadily declined during his tenure. It was not the *economic* dimension of security to which State could contribute, as Christopher wanted, but rather the *security* dimension of economics.

Christopher seems to have been aware of his vulnerability on this point. Unusual for him, he boasts that his intervention at a NATO Council meeting on the importance of reaching a European Union–U.S. trade agreement concerning the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) influenced the Europeans (p. 132). But he does not mention that in March 1996, over his objections, President Clinton ended State's control over dual-use satellite and jet engine technology proposed for sale to China and passed it to Commerce. Losing such authority under any circumstances would be a severe blow to State's standing in the interagency turf wars. Adding injury to insult, a turnover to Ron Brown's Commerce Department effectively meant opening every sluice

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in the dam. And because the heads of corporations which stood to benefit from the business were big contributors to the Democratic Party, the president was acutely vulnerable to charges that he had sold out the national security to the Chinese for cash.

As for the relationship of force to diplomacy, this principle was apparently Christopher's way of reassuring everyone that he was free of the Vietnam syndrome, or perhaps the Carter syndrome. It suggested a readiness to use limited force for limited goals. Good enough; but Christopher could not take on Colin Powell alone if he wished to modify the "Desert Storm or nothing" implications of the Powell Doctrine. He needed the president. Unfortunately, Clinton had his own Vietnam baggage, which early in his term was made all the heavier by the flap over homosexuals in uniform. Unlike Madeleine Albright, Christopher apparently uttered no complaints over Powell's caution regarding Somalia and Bosnia in 1993. And as we shall later see in Holbrooke's book, Christopher's understanding of the role of force was more theory than practice.

The third principle, support for the "democratic revolution," was put to an early and brutal test when the Clinton administration linked renewal of China's trade status to specific improvements in human rights. The Chinese would have none of it, and Christopher himself was rudely rebuffed in Beijing in March 1994: Chinese behavior was "rough, somber, sometimes bordering on the insolent" (p. 153). His grim recitation of events, including his observation that "even the president's own enthusiasm had waned in light of widespread business opposition" (p. 155), suggests a lawyer defending his client just as the client changes his mind. Sure enough, the speech prefaced by this account turns out to be "China: A Decision to Engage," wherein Christopher justifies the new policy as a better way to encourage Chinese democracy. The speech is clever and unusually frank, but his assertion that this policy still left the Chinese on the hook is, to use Christopher-like understatement, simply unconvincing.

Thus, the three principles articulated by Christopher proved to be duds, either not apt for the State Department or refuted by events. Despite the secretary's hard work and devoted speechwriters, the material proved so thin that by the fall of 1993 the job of explaining foreign policy was taken over briefly by the national security adviser, Anthony Lake, who produced the doctrine of "democratic enlargement," an idea that posited the inevitable spread of democracy and free markets assisted by American policy. The disaster in Somalia soon overshadowed this effort and the "doctrine" survived primarily as filler for the high-minded opening paragraphs of administration speeches.

"The Stream of History"

Christopher was clearly not cut out for the job of devising either a new strategy or a new articulation of it. His speechwriters faithfully supplied him with reference to principles and strategy, but the secretary of state had taken to heart Supreme Court justice William O. Douglas's advice to him in 1949:

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"Get out in the stream of history, and swim as fast as you can" (p. 537). This quote provides not only the book's title, but upon reflection, the best guide to Christopher's performance: a man unable to shape the stream, whose achievement is to "swim fast." Not vain enough to believe he could actually be a strategist, he prided himself instead on his ability to manage crises.

Christopher's key stroke in the swim was "our overarching strategy of asserting leadership through engagement with the key powers" (p. 157). This strategy comported with his oft-repeated slogan about the "neglected imperative" of diplomacy, "new dispute resolution techniques and focus of international arbitration." Yet even by this standard, Christopher's own words raise serious questions.

One example is NATO expansion and its impact on relations with Boris Yeltsin's Russia. Christopher cites this as a major achievement, for it not only extended "security" and "stability" eastward, but even earned Moscow's acquiescence. This result would have been truly impressive—had it been true. However, the Russians to this day remain opposed to NATO expansion, arguing that it is directed against them as the enemy. In a view shared across Moscow's political spectrum, expansion ratifies Russian decline, intruding Western forces into what Russians think should remain a neutral zone.

The Clinton administration was divided over the issue. The "Russia firsters," led by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, a close Clinton friend and coordinator of policy toward Russia, opposed expansion. Others, such as key figures in State's policy planning staff and the so-called NATO lobby, which included important members of Congress, strongly advocated it.

These debates eventually issued in something called the Partnership for Peace in October 1993, which was envisaged as a kind of corridor to increased military cooperation and eventual membership for those who were qualified. It would be "gradual, transparent" and "not confronting Russia." The Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs interpreted the partnership as a delay, and they were unhappy. Christopher next took the program to Moscow. The Russians had just gone through a coup-countercoup sequence that ended with Yeltsin on top after his forces seized the rebellious parliament, an action fully supported by the United States. Arriving but three weeks after these events, Christopher explained the idea of the partnership to the ebullient Russian leader, who called it "a stroke of genius." Christopher then drily notes: "In retrospect, it is clear that his enthusiasm was based on his mistaken assumption that the Partnership for Peace would not lead to eventual NATO expansion" (pp. 93–94).

But was it mistaken, especially when Christopher emphasized the gradual, drawn-out nature of the PFP antechamber, which Russia itself would presumably occupy? Or was this another case of the secretary of state taking the blame for a president who changed his mind not long thereafter? Is Christopher as inept as his own memoirs suggest, or is he covering for Clinton?

Here, a footnote is illuminating. Christopher refers readers to an article by Prof. James Goldgeier as the "best" account of the expansion decision. After trying in vain to establish the decisive moment, Goldgeier concludes: "These interpretations vary so widely because the president and his top advisers did

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not make a formal decision about a timetable or process for expansion until long after Clinton had started saying NATO would enlarge."[2] In other words, behind the facade of order and the stately march of Christopher's oratory lurked a chaotic decision-making process that could leave Christopher dangerously vague about his brief.

In another case, the granting of a visa to Taiwanese president Lee Teng-Hui, that vagueness did indeed cause trouble. By 1995, U.S. relations with the PRC were on the mend; trade, not human rights, was ascendant. Moreover, on Beijing's most neuralgic issue—the U.S.-assisted survival of the anti-communists in Taipei—there were modest hopes. Both sides of the Taiwan Strait had advanced an official "unofficial dialogue" on pragmatic issues. Meanwhile, the islanders, grown prosperous under a neocapitalist policy, were investing large sums on the mainland.

Behind the facade of order lurked a chaotic decision-making process.

The fly in the ointment was politics, specifically, the transformation of the Kuomintang's martial law regime on Taiwan into a democracy. Political reform allowed the rise of an anti-Chinese native party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which openly advocated a formal declaration of independence from China, dispensing with the idea of eventual reunification. Lee Teng-Hui, himself a native Taiwanese, was engaged in a subtle outflanking of the DPP, attempting to find "international space" for Taiwan while simultaneously improving contacts with Beijing. He started a noisy campaign to get Taiwan back into the United Nations, and his officials sought high-level meetings with other governments, even under ambiguous circumstances. This "vacation diplomacy" took a new turn when Lee himself sought a visa to attend a class reunion at Cornell University in the United States.

The Clinton administration, following its predecessors, advocated a peaceful reunion of Beijing and Taiwan under the elastic slogan of "one China," the formal position of both sides. It loosened the self-imposed Carter-era prohibitions on U.S. cabinet-level visits to Taiwan and supported the island's membership in international organizations that did not stipulate statehood. Fearful of congressional support for Lee's visa, the administration "decided to allow it under carefully circumscribed conditions" (p. 286), draining the visit of political overtones—an oddly unrealistic idea, because the very act of visiting was highly political. Christopher blames Lee for making a provocative speech at Cornell but then notes that "the problem was aggravated by a misunderstanding I had with vice premier and foreign minister Qian" of the PRC (p. 287).

In April 1995, Christopher assured his Chinese counterpart that there would be no change in U.S. policy: only "unofficial" relations with Taiwan. He then added obliquely that the congressional votes endorsing Lee's visit "could not be ignored. This warning was intended to alert Qian that a visa might be issued. But he heard only the first half of my statement . . ." (p. 287).

[2] James Goldgeier, "NATO Enlargement: Anatomy of a Decision," *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1998, p. 100.

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Again, Christopher's account beggars belief. Even a reasonably subtle diplomat could not be expected to hear in the secretary of state's words "a warning." Perhaps the explanation lies in the sequence of events: Christopher's meeting with Qian occurred in April, the visit in July, and in between, recommendations from Christopher, Lake, and others that the visa be approved. Was this another case of the president's abruptly deciding to do something and then leaving Christopher and the rest of the team to exercise "damage control" through the "carefully circumscribed conditions" that Lee did not respect?

In any event, Clinton, Christopher, and others hastened to reassure the outraged Chinese that nothing had changed. But on July 24–26, the PRC tested six surface-to-surface missiles clearly intended to intimidate Taiwan. Christopher tells us that his July 28 Press Club speech on this issue "seemed to have the most immediate effect" of all his rhetorical efforts because five days later, when he met the embarrassed Qian in Brunei, the Chinese diplomat was surprisingly business-like. This time, Christopher was more candid. In language reminiscent of Clinton's statement on abortion ("safe, legal, and rare"), he told Qian that future Taiwanese visits might occur, but only "if they were personal, private, unofficial, non-political—and rare" (p. 289). Christopher then appends, in a marvel of mixed metaphors, an excerpt from his report to Clinton: "[A]fter the train wreck . . . [t]he relationship may have bottomed out, and will be on the mend unless there is some additional provocation" (p. 290).

Here, too, mysteries abound. On this occasion, Qian may have returned the favor of oblique subtleties. Christopher emerged quite optimistic about U.S.-PRC relations, but does not mention that the Chinese missile tests resumed in August. Worse, Christopher's own message, as understood by the Chinese, may not have been at all reassuring. After all, he was telling them that new visas might be issued; in other words, Beijing could expect more of the same. In this worst-case reading, Christopher's "immediate effect" might well have been to convince the Chinese that they needed to shock Washington out of its course.

Christopher's account of the subsequent crisis, which in early 1996 brought the United States and the PRC perilously close to military confrontation, is separated from the visa incident by some 139 pages. The distance is the more curious when one reads that the administration feared that Lee, recently reelected president in Taiwan, might be invited to address a joint session of Congress (p. 426). In short, one could argue from Christopher's own words that the Chinese had ceased to trust the secretary of state's locutions, a very serious "misunderstanding" indeed. Not surprisingly, National Security Adviser Tony Lake was reported to have taken on the China portfolio following the Strait missile crisis, and it has remained in the White House ever since.

Middle East Misfortunes

Christopher, like his predecessors, was condemned to spend a great deal of time on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This graveyard of diplomatic reputations

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seems to have both fascinated and repelled him. His capacity to endure punishment suited him well to the grindstone of the interminable "peace process," but ultimately he failed to understand the recalcitrance of the locals.

At first Christopher benefitted from that rarest of occurrences, a breakthrough arranged largely by the parties themselves. He had inherited Bush's diplomatic team and the still-moribund Madrid talks, but in August 1993 Yitzhak Rabin and Yassir Arafat reached the Oslo agreement. Although Christopher and Clinton lost little time in graciously blessing this gift, Christopher spent most of his time in Damascus—until Oslo itself began to break down in 1995–96.

Christopher offers paragraphs of justification for his investing twenty meetings with Assad over four years, with no discernible result. He argues that the stakes were high, the Israelis wanted it, and the Syrians appeared to want it. To be sure, Christopher faced a daunting challenge: not only did the parties disagree over the details of a settlement, but they did not even agree on procedure. Assad apparently wanted a version of Henry Kissinger's 1973–74 shuttle, with the United States doing the heavy lifting through an indirect negotiation with Israel. Rabin insisted on direct negotiations and signs of serious intent, such as secret channels, which had preceded every significant Arab-Israeli agreement; he wanted the United States to "facilitate" but not to mediate.

Christopher tried to break this deadlock through sheer persistence: he showed up again and again, seemingly mistaking motion (his) for movement (theirs). But all the visits, including a controversial trip to Damascus by Clinton himself, failed to evince from Assad the slightest respect for the Israeli case. The Syrian leader was competing with Sadat's ghost and wanted not only to beat the Israelis, but also to take retroactive revenge on the Egyptian leader. Eventually, Assad trifled once too often with Christopher's long-suffering dignity, and the secretary ended this shuttle to nowhere. He apparently never realized that his frequent-flier miles earned en route to Damascus gave Assad something he craved (prestige from the sole superpower) for nothing (talks to which he had already agreed at Madrid and no change in any other policy, including terrorism).

As for Rabin, Christopher describes him as rough but honest. A more complex view is available from the memoir of Itamar Rabinovich, Rabin's chief Syrian negotiator and ambassador to the United States.[3] He describes the tensions of 1993–94: Rabin would not allow his theoretical willingness to yield the Golan to be translated into a written commitment, but rather wanted Christopher to use this as a lure to get Assad to convince Rabin that he really wanted to deal by offering details of Syria's "full peace." After the Oslo agreement, Christopher had to signal the Syrians in a carefully wrought speech that the United States fully supported Arafat and Rabin, even if this stance put Assad in second place (p. 80). But he was quick to resume the trail throughout the frequent ups and downs of the subsequent Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

[3] Itamar Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace: The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 133–34.

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In the end, Rabin's theoretical proposition on Israeli withdrawal from the Golan got its fullest test after his murder, when the Syrians, under American auspices at Wye Plantation, at last began to deal seriously with security issues. But this effort, too, came to naught. Having shuttled in vain between (in his view) the slow-moving Rabin and the non-moving Assad, Christopher was now caught between the too-fast Peres and the too-slow Assad. When Peres broke off talks to call early elections, Assad suspected that he had been used, and helped to foment violence in Lebanon. Christopher's conclusion: "Assad missed the opportunity of a lifetime to recover the Golan Heights" (p. 191).

In line with the Clinton administration's general belief in the magic of money, Christopher trumpets the four Middle East economic summits as real achievements. These initiatives ultimately foundered as Oslo turned sour and the Egyptians began to fear Israeli economic domination. There is, however, a rare page or two of humor, especially when Mubarak and Arafat go after each other at a botched signing ceremony in May 1994: "I had never seen anything like the chaotic scene that followed" (p. 499). But these pratfalls were actually good memories by the end of Christopher's tenure, when he records the somber events of Rabin's murder, Netanyahu's "precipitous actions," and Arafat's "holding out for more" (p. 503). The epitaph for Christopher's Mideast diplomacy might read: "He tried hard."

The Problem from Hell

Christopher also tried hard on the Balkans. This crisis was another inheritance from the Bush administration that proved to be a personal baptism by fire. Christopher and the new president had been deeply moved by the atrocities committed by the Bosnian Serbs with encouragement from Slobodan Milosevic. The two Americans were determined to stop "ethnic cleansing," but what they faced was a situation Christopher later described as the "problem from hell."

The war for the Yugoslav succession, as it might be called, conflated all the most complex issues of the post–Cold War world, including failed statehood, ethnic conflict, human rights, multiculturalism, and centuries of carefully nurtured grievances on all sides. Yugoslavia was full of the dry tinder of history in 1990. But someone had to strike the match, and Milosevic promptly did so.

Milosevic had in mind an alternative to communist Yugoslavia's more or less unhappy ethnic cooperation. It was a Greater Serbia. Where Serbs lived, there would they rule. Where Serbs no longer lived, but cherished memories of martyrdom, such as in the Albanian-inhabited holy land of Kosovo, they would still rule by reducing the inhabitants to colonial status. To this task Milosevic brought a singular—one is tempted to say Hitlerian—gift: an instinctive understanding of his opponents' weaknesses and his own people's darkest desires. How else to explain why one man could lead a deluded nation steadily

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down the road to ruin through a decade of war against the world's most powerful states?

When Christopher stepped into the ring, Milosevic, working largely through local forces aided by Serbian army officers and equipment, had already detached Serb-inhabited Croatia and the northeastern part of Bosnia. To secure these positions, the Serbs had driven before them a flood of refugees and selectively murdered a goodly number to encourage the exodus. The world's horror at these events had failed to galvanize an effective opposition, and the usual expedients—U.N. resolutions and an arms and economic embargo—had produced occasional promises but no compliance. Washington made a late plea against the breakup. When that failed, the Bush administration stayed clear of the fray. As Secretary of State James A. Baker remarked, "We don't have a dog in that fight." Instead, the Europeans were given the charge, and they botched it. Anglo-French peacekeeping troops deployed in Croatia and Bosnia under U.N. auspices merely confirmed the new ethnic lines, and Bush, in a quixotic gesture that Clinton would later have to act upon, warned Milosevic in December 1992 that if he tried ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, the United States would attack him.

In May 1993, Clinton sent Christopher to Europe with a solution for the steadily worsening situation in Bosnia, where for over a year the newly declared state dominated by the Slavic Muslim majority had been torn by both Serbian and Croatian separatists. All eyes were on the historic capital, Sarajevo, the scene of the spark that ignited World War I and now increasingly desperate under a vicious Serbian siege.

Washington's solution was called "lift and strike," the idea being to lift the international arms embargo so that the Muslims could rearm, while using allied air power to hold off the Serbs. This move immediately undercut—some would say collapsed—the agreement patiently negotiated by Christopher's old boss, Cyrus Vance, and the former British foreign minister, David Owen. Their Swiss canton–like reorganization of a federal Bosnia was suspect because it clearly lent weight to the ethnic demarcation that gave the Serbs effective domination over 43 percent of the territory. "We thought the plan too complex to be implemented," notes Christopher (p. 344), an unintentionally wry comment from the man who later negotiated the hellishly complex Dayton accords that gave the Serbs 49 percent. Lack of U.S. support surely doomed the Vance-Owen plan (both Owen and then–U.N. secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali faulted Washington), although Christopher puts the blame on the Serbs, who rejected the plan even as he made his trip to Europe.[4]

Christopher's approach to the NATO allies, who had troops on the ground and fully expected the Serbs to attack if they were bombed, might have worked if the United States had been prepared to put its own troops in harm's way to share the risk. But Christopher could not offer that and instead presented

[4] See Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga* (New York: Random House, 1999), pp. 68–71. For Christopher's version, see *In the Stream of History*, pp. 344–46.

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the "lift and strike" plan for thoughtful review, "not . . . as a fait accompli" (p. 346). After half a century of dealing with Washington, the Europeans interpreted this to mean that Washington did not really want to "lift and strike," but needed allied opposition to justify a search for another option. They offered plenty of opposition. Such diplomacy, combined with U.S. reluctance to offer even a few hundred soldiers, struck the Europeans as hypocritical. Christopher, upon returning home, recognized the error: "They will only be persuaded by the raw power approach," he reported to Clinton. "That is, we have to tell them that we have finally decided to go ahead with our preferred option and that we expect them to support us" (p. 346).

It was just as well that Christopher's mission failed, for he might have brought back allied agreement only to find that, as he put it, "there had been a sea change in attitudes during the week I had been away" (p. 347). By now the reader knows what this means: Clinton had changed his mind again. Evidently the president, having dispatched Christopher, decided to "read" himself into the problem and promptly repealed his earlier decision. Among the readings in question was a book called *Balkan Ghosts*, by Robert Kaplan.[5]

This reviewer knows Robert Kaplan well and finds it odd that the book's content would have put Clinton off the balance-of-power approach of the "lift and strike" plan, designed as it was to offset Serbian advantages in the war at minimal risk to the United States. *Balkan Ghosts* explores the sometimes terrifying historical myths that, preserved in the Cold War ice, were thawing out. Kaplan's own preface makes clear his detestation of the Serbian war and argues that action must be taken against it. But then Christopher gives us a keen insight: there was another ghost, that of Vietnam, haunting both the president and the Pentagon (p. 347). And then Christopher offers a still keener insight: *Balkan Ghosts* and other works "presented a grim picture of prospects for reconciliation" (p. 347). In short, a war for multiculturalism in the Balkans had little chance of attaining its ultimate purpose and therefore was not worth the risk.

In this one page we are offered the key to understanding the Clinton administration's erratic behavior on the Bosnia and, indeed, Kosovo crises. Short of a slaughter that suddenly justified military intervention, the president lacked a rationale for action, balance-of-power politics being beyond the pale. Put another way, Humpty Dumpty had to fall off the wall before the White House could decide to put him back together again.

The Brightest

Humpty Dumpty lost no time in falling as Serbian outrages multiplied. Washington and its allies accordingly abandoned the United Nations in favor of a contact group—including Russia—modelled on the successful southern African diplomacy originated by Chester Crocker. In fact, the group resembled

[5] Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

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the old nineteenth-century Concert of Powers, which gave the Balkans thirty years of peace after the Congress of Berlin in 1878. But these were not nineteenth-century powers, and what issued from their deliberations was a plethora of plans and threats but little by way of force.

Onto this stage of feckless diplomacy entered Richard Holbrooke, whose account, *To End a War*, is molded to fit the impressive ego of its author. A foreign service officer whom one could count among the "walking wounded" from the Vietnam War, Holbrooke served the Carter administration as assistant secretary of state for Asia. There he sought to withdraw U.S. troops from South Korea—one of Carter's early objectives—until, under pressure, that president reversed himself, too. During the 1980s Holbrooke continued to dabble in foreign policy while earning a fortune as an investment banker. Indeed, Holbrooke's hard-charging reputation may have kept him from the Tokyo embassy in 1993, which went instead to Walter Mondale. He landed in Germany, which became a haunted land for him when he learned that his refugee parents had hidden from him his Jewish identity. But by all accounts, Holbrooke did well in Bonn and from that vantage point watched with dismay as the Balkan fiasco began to harm NATO itself.

In the summer of 1994 Holbrooke returned to Washington to become assistant secretary of state for European affairs. An observer noted early in the Clinton years that "they make decisions and then have no, absolutely no idea of how to get the bureaucracy to implement those decisions. . . . There is no enforcer."[6] Holbrooke excelled at enforcement, and he soon brought a measure of action on the issue of NATO enlargement. From another source, we have a vivid picture of him accusing Defense Department officers of "insubordination" for failing to act on the president's "evident" decision to expand NATO (which, as observed earlier, was not all that clear). But Holbrooke's real interest was Bosnia.

When a vacuum develops in the State Department, meaning that lower-level officials lack guidance from above, most of the professionals reinforce their natural caution by moving from slow to stop. A few, however, see in the vacuum the opportunity to advance their own ideas—and themselves. Thus, Holbrooke records his relentless personal campaign to get the Bosnian policy into his hands and then fix it. To do this he was prepared to take risks, personal and political, and to take others with him.

Inevitably, there are casualties. The book opens, for example, with a poignant account of an accident on the notoriously treacherous Mount Igman road into Sarajevo, which claimed the lives of three distinguished colleagues (to whom Holbrooke dedicated this book). Holbrooke and his friends took that road because he would not compromise the U.S. refusal to recognize Bosnian Serb authority, which Milosevic insisted upon in return for guaranteeing a safe flight into Sarajevo's besieged airport. Add to that the later accidental death of Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, and a remarkable fact emerges: this is one

[6] Quoted in Mary Curtins, "Massachusetts Man is Clinton's Invisible Adviser," *Boston Globe*, Sept. 16, 1993.

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conflict in which high-ranking civilians perish, but airmen and foot soldiers are yet to lose a man. In any event, Holbrooke establishes early on that he is what Richard Nixon used to call "*un homme serieux*"—a serious man aware of the statesman's tragic choices.

As Holbrooke anxiously worked the diplomatic route—meetings here, there, everywhere—the Serbs hacked away at the Bosnian state and the shreds of U.N. and NATO authority. Serbian encroachments on so-called U.N. safezones called forth NATO "pinprick" air strikes. In retaliation, the Serbs seized peacekeepers as hostages. Then they overreached. The display of French soldiers handcuffed to trees and telephone poles waving white flags of surrender was more than newly elected French president Jacques Chirac could bear. France had contributed the largest number of peacekeepers, yet had relatively little to say about policy. Suddenly Holbrooke, who vainly advocated a heavy bombing campaign to secure the release of the hostages, had a powerful ally.

The ghost of Vietnam hovered over Clinton's entire foreign policy.

Chirac's message to Clinton was, "Get tough or get out." But getting out would invoke an earlier Clinton pledge to help with an evacuation of the European troops. (Neither Holbrooke nor Christopher specify the date of this pledge, which may have originated in the 1993 Christopher mission.) NATO had even devised a withdrawal plan, known as OpPlan 40-104. It required over twenty thousand U.S. soldiers.

Holbrooke does not tell us how he learned of OpPlan 40-104, but once briefed on it, he lost no time in telling Christopher. (Nor does he mention that Senator Bob Dole's successful drive to pass resolutions advocating the lifting of the arms embargo—a trigger for British and French withdrawal—put Clinton even deeper into Chirac's box.) Together, the two shaken diplomats decided to use the occasion of Chirac's Washington visit on June 14 to tell the president that "his options had been dramatically narrowed" (p. 64). The briefing with Clinton "quickly degenerated. . . . The presentation . . . was, in my view, misleading . . . especially [as to] the degree of American 'automaticity' in assisting a U.N. withdrawal. . . . [T]he president, obviously disturbed . . . cut me off sharply" (p. 67). That day Holbrooke and Christopher earned their striped pants, spoiling a beautiful evening for the Clintons by telling the president that it was not he, but the Europeans, who could trigger a U.S. troop involvement, should they choose to withdraw. "Is this true?" asks the unhappy Clinton. "We have a problem," answers the laconic Christopher (p. 68).

All of this provoked another policy review, obviously intended to get Clinton out of his box. It was assigned to Tony Lake, and Holbrooke was cut out of meetings. He wanted to resign but Clinton's golfing pal, Vernon Jordan, persuaded him not to "abandon" the president.

Then came another Serbian overreach. Beginning on July 6 and continuing for ten days, the Serbs massacred thousands of Muslims in the so-called safe zone of Srebrenica as Dutch troops stood by or were disarmed. The Serbs' purpose here reflected an overlooked aspect of the war: they were not quite strong enough to break the Bosnian state. Their connections to the Krajina in

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Croatia were not secure; their holdings in eastern Bosnia ran through the very narrow Posavina Corridor. In the spring and summer of 1995, the local Serbian leaders, the one-time Sarajevo psychiatrist Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, a serving Yugoslav army officer, decided to go for broke, and Belgrade certainly did not restrain them.

In reaction to Srebrenica, the London conference of the allies met on July 21, just as the Serbs attacked Bihac, another isolated Muslim enclave vital to the defense of the Krajina. The United States and the Europeans finally agreed to draw a "line in the sand" around yet another Muslim enclave in the east, Gorazde. But no thanks go to our hero, who was recovering from an ear infection and then "traveling in the western states with [his new wife] Kati" during Clinton's three crucial post-London meetings on Bosnia. Holbrooke claims that he had "deliberately remained at a distance, not only because of my family commitments, but also because participating might have reduced my negotiating flexibility later" (pp. 73–74). More likely, others were keeping him at a distance. But suddenly, on August 12, Lake summoned him to London and assigned him the job of negotiating a new settlement of the war. "This is the kind of thing we dreamed of doing together thirty years ago when we started out in Vietnam," says Lake, according to Holbrooke, "and if this thing fails, it's my ass more than yours" (p. 74).

Exorcising the Ghost

As this passage illustrates, Holbrooke and Lake were not quite alone in the room—the ghost of Vietnam hovered over them as it did over Clinton's entire foreign policy. Holbrooke, charter member of the "best and brightest" generation blighted by the losing war in Southeast Asia, spends many pages trying to exorcise that specter, and he finally succeeds through the most unlikely conjuror of all, Croatian president Franjo Tudjman.

Tudjman was not a man with clean hands. He had been instrumental in stirring up Croatian nationalism, and his solution to the Bosnian problem (illustrated by an infamous map he drew on a napkin at Queen Elizabeth II's banquet in April 1995) was to partition the province with Milosevic. That spring, the Pentagon (and State) had dissuaded him with difficulty from attacking the Serbs in the Krajina. Washington believed that the newly trained and equipped Croatian army (the international embargo was *very* leaky) would either not defeat the Bosnian Serbs or else draw in the Yugoslav army. Tudjman disregarded this advice and in early August attacked the Krajina.

When Milosevic did not throw his army into Bosnia for the purpose of saving his Greater Serbia, the surprised Bosnian Serbs beat a disorderly retreat, and another 200,000 refugees, this time Serbs, fled the Croatian "cleansing." Holbrooke quotes Bob Frasure, an aide who died in the Mt. Igman accident:

> Dick: We 'hired' these guys to be our junkyard dogs. . . . But this is no time to get squeamish about things. This is the first time the Serb wave has been reversed. That is essential for us to get stability, so we can get out (p. 73).

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In fact, it was the way to get in.

Although Holbrooke admits that he was slow to appreciate the strategic value of the Croatian offensive, he soon had an epiphany. On August 28 the Serbs blew up a Sarajevo marketplace, killing thirty-five people. Holbrooke finally put it all together during a discussion with Talbott in which he advocated the strongest possible retaliatory air strike. The conversation, writes Holbrooke,

> was also part of a controversy that had gone on for thirty years about the relationship between diplomacy and airpower. . . . There was irony in my support of airstrikes. As a young Foreign Service officer working in Vietnam, I had disagreed with the air campaign against North Vietnam. To many of those opposed to the use of airpower in Bosnia the lesson of Vietnam . . . was that airpower would be ineffective unless backed up by ground troops—a political impossibility in Bosnia. But . . . Bosnia was different, and so were our objectives (pp. 92–93).

Suddenly it was all very clear: Belgrade was not Hanoi, the Bosnian Serbs were not the Viet Cong, and the Croats could relieve NATO of the ground role. In the Croatian offensive and serious bombing campaign, Holbrooke found the means to bring the Serbs, and Milosevic himself, to Dayton. But not everyone got it, and so even as Christopher was urging Tudjman to halt the offensive, Holbrooke was advising the Croats to advance far enough to frighten the Serbs but not so far as to compel Yugoslav intervention.

Holbrooke may finally have liberated himself from the Vietnam ghost, but others went their own way. The air campaign halted too soon because the military wanted to end it unless it got a broader range of targets. And where was the commander-in-chief? A few days before, at a critical meeting in which even Christopher finally saw the connection between the bombing and the softening Serbian negotiating position, the president said: "I am frustrated that the air campaign is not better coordinated with the diplomatic effort." "This was an astute observation," notes Holbrooke, but "there was no mechanism or structure within the Administration capable of such coordination. It was, in fact, the role of the NSC [National Security Council]. . . . I wanted to tell the president that this problem required immediate attention. But relations among the NSC, State, and Defense were not something an Assistant Secretary of State could fix." As a result, "the military had rewritten our negotiating timetable" (pp. 145–46). Swallowing his moral scruples, Holbrooke then took off four days early to see the newly indicted war criminals Karadzic and Mladic in the company of the unindicted war criminal Milosevic. It soon became embarrassingly obvious that Milosevic was calling the shots (pp. 148–52).

Dayton: The Bosnia Model

As once suggested by a Belgrade journalist, Milosevic liked to play both the arsonist and the fireman. His decision to cut his losses in Bosnia in order to avoid a collision with superior forces also dictated his strategy at the subsequent

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Dayton conference (November 1–15, 1995). Milosevic would become the U.S. "partner," and the Americans, anxious for peace, were prepared to go along.

More than half of Holbrooke's book concerns the shuttle that preceded Dayton and the conference itself. His own achievements loom large throughout, yet he is aware that his methods, shall we say, breed resentment. "Creative chaos," he tells Christopher, as an excuse for lack of timely or orderly briefings. Yet Holbrooke's combination of soothing charm, controlled anger, and naked ambition suited him well in dealing with the Balkan wrecking crew. He offers nice pen sketches of the cocksure Tudjman, the proud but ineffective Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic, and above all, Milosevic himself.

Conscious of the Belgrade strongman's dual nature, Holbrooke did his best to force Milosevic into the role of fireman rather than arsonist. It was not easy. Milosevic and the others liked late-night drinking bouts, protracted negotiations, snarling animosity, and decisions invariably made past deadline. Worst of all, as Holbrooke notes time and again, no deal was ever carried out if the dealmaker, having left the room, calculated that the balance of power had changed in his favor.

This was not a game the legalistic State Department knew how to play. Even the ever-patient Christopher could not take it. "What the hell is going on here?" he said loudly at one point to the Bosnian foreign minister when the latter's government backtracked. "I made an agreement with your president just two hours ago" (p. 182).

Meanwhile, Holbrooke was struggling to make the Pentagon conform to his ideas. There he encountered the "Vietmalia" ghost, a hybrid of the Vietnam syndrome and the 1993 disaster in Somalia. So to get the military to sign off on an "Implementation Force" (IFOR) for Bosnia, the administration agreed to a very narrow mission, putting U.S. and other forces along the cease-fire lines, but leaving it to the civilians to arrange for the return of refugees. That, argued Holbrooke, would be self-defeating, for "the narrower the military mission, the longer they would have to stay" (p. 119). But Clinton insisted on selling IFOR to the American people as a mission that would take only a year. Of course, the NATO operation in Bosnia continues to this day with no expiration in sight, while Bosnia itself is a partitioned state and charity case ministered to by an army of foreign social workers and civil servants 50,000 strong—hardly the promised land of tolerant multiethnicity.

Holbrooke resigned soon after Dayton, but his Balkan travails were not over. In June 1996 he wrote Clinton a letter (partially reproduced in the book) that asked him in effect to fix Dayton by arresting Karadzic, taking over the means of communication, staging the elections prescribed by Dayton, and thereby presumably reconciling ethnic groups. "Having reasserted American leadership in Europe, it would be a tragedy if we let it slip away again . . ." (p. 339). That may strike the reader as odd inasmuch as American leadership was not "reasserted" by Clinton at all, but rather by Chirac (and Dole). In the event, Holbrooke sat down again with Milosevic and extracted a victory of sorts when the September 1997 election yielded a one-vote majority in favor of

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Dayton in the Bosnian assembly. "The American effort in Bosnia was paying off," he concludes (p. 357).

The Sequel: Kosovo

In fact, one of the prices of partnership with Milosevic on Bosnia was the exclusion of Kosovo from the Dayton accords. Holbrooke writes that "warnings" about Kosovo "restrained" Milosevic, but he evinces no understanding that the failure to offer anything to the Kosovars undercut the pacifist leadership there. As a result, once Albania's own government collapsed and its armories flew open, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) had the resources to start killing Serbian police and court popular sympathy. Holbrooke does note, however, that after ethnic cleansing began, "Secretary Albright, determined not to repeat the mistakes of 1991–92, moved swiftly to create a united Contact Group front to put pressure on Milosevic, but, in a replay of Bosnia, it was difficult to gain a unified stance sufficient to impress him" (p. 357).

These words were penned by a man determined to be hopeful. But as we know now, Kosovo repeated the earlier mistakes in more ways than one, and even the eventual military campaign failed to spare the Kosovars the most brutal ethnic cleansing yet. For some reason, Washington thought it could replay the events of Bosnia, even though no equivalent to the Croatian "junkyard dogs" existed in Kosovo to forge a balance of power on the ground. So instead of another Dayton, there was the Rambouillet ultimatum, to which Holbrooke himself wrote the epitaph. On March 23, 1999, as he left Belgrade after failing to secure Milosevic's agreement, a reporter asked whether a NATO bombing might accelerate ethnic cleansing. Holbrooke replied, "That is our greatest fear by far, by far," and when queried how NATO air power could prevent such a calamity, he gave a silent shrug.[7]

The Clinton Legacy, or the CNN Doctrine

Both Christopher and Holbrooke close their books with general observations about foreign policy. Christopher's finale is a reprise of verities: the need for U.S. leadership, bipartisanship, and all the ingredients of "global engagement"—including more money for the State Department, which he failed to obtain. After reciting various achievements, he even boasts that "the [Russian] economy had begun to stabilize, with production increasing at last" (p. 548)—words written just a month before the Russian collapse. The dust jacket notes that the president thanked him warmly for "laying the foundations for our future." But by this time the reader has had his fill of such official rhetoric and, given the banalities of the conclusion, wonders whether the secretary came to confuse his speeches with reality.

[7] Blaine Harden, "Chain of Events That Led Serb Leader to Cry 'Wolf,'" *New York Times*, June 6, 1999.

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Christopher's often artfully concealed evidence does confirm, however, Holbrooke's open account of a presidency only fitfully at grips with foreign policy. Clinton did not know what he wished to do in the world, his closest advisers were not strategic thinkers, and in any case he lacked an effective system to enforce decisions and coordinate diplomatic and military actions. Indeed, the charge that Clinton is indecisive is false; he was *too* decisive, and while the presidential mind made and unmade itself, his officials were likely to be presenting an out-of-date brief. This chaos struck Colin Powell as a graduate school bull session not unlike the crisis roundtables of the Kennedy administration that so horrified Dean Acheson. But Clinton had a huge advantage over Kennedy and, indeed, over all his Cold War predecessors, namely, that there was no other superpower. So the blunders might be costly, especially in terms of lives lost by those such as the Kosovars, but so long as American casualties were low, the president's ratings and the American sense of security would remain high.

Lloyd George, once accused by an opponent of ruining Britain, replied, "It takes a lot of ruining to ruin a great country." Clinton's run of ruin has arguably not impaired the American position because none of our enemies is strong enough to take decisive advantage of our blunders. Clinton has now waged his winning war, which in his view should put him in the pantheon of the great presidents who vanquished evil. Like Bush's Saddam, Clinton's Milosevic knowingly or unknowingly played the heavy with great relish. Clinton, in turn, held an alliance, including the Russians, together. Unlike Bush, he resisted his generals' counsel to wage a land campaign. The real price of victory, of course, will be paid by Clinton's successor, who will find that NATO has indefinitely committed 100,000 troops and untold treasure to "solve" the problems of this most problematic region.

Yet Clinton's most important legacy might not be found in the tangled stories that Holbrooke and others will tell or the current imperial overstretch of the U.S. military. It may instead arise from that new "idea" or "structure" that Christopher sought in vain. Holbrooke argues that the old clash between idealists and realists in U.S. foreign policy is false. "In the long run, our strategic interests and human rights supported and reinforced each other and could be advanced at the same time. In short, American foreign policy needed to embrace both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson" (p. 367). This is hardly a novel thought. Every president finds it necessary to adjust the balance between the two. But when queried about a possible Clinton Doctrine shortly after the end of the Kosovo War, the president replied: "[T]here's an important principle here . . . that whether within or beyond the borders of the country, if the world community has the power to stop it, we ought to stop genocide and ethnic cleansing."[8] This concept sounds enlightened enough, but carries enormous

[8] CNN "Late Edition," Senior White House Correspondent Wolf Blitzer interview with U.S. President Bill Clinton, June 20, 1999 (http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/I2R?urn:pdi://oma.eop.gov.us/1999/6/23/7.text.1).

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implications, for it would commit the United States to what British prime minister Tony Blair called "the humanitarian war" around the globe. And it offers cold comfort for those who would be saved by such wars because, as we have seen in these books, only a great televised massacre will prompt decisive action by Washington. In an age dominated by spinmeisterei, not realpolitik, we now have the CNN Doctrine.

The Renewal of Henry A. Kissinger

by David Eisenhower

Years of Renewal. By Henry A. Kissinger. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999. 1,119 pp. $35.)

In a telling scene from his third volume of memoirs, Kissinger recalls the end of an era. It is mid-May 1975, a month after the Khmer Rouge unleashed genocidal terror on Cambodia's gentle population and two weeks after North Vietnam's armored columns rolled into Saigon. On the afternoon of May 12, word came to Washington that Khmer Rouge units had seized an American vessel, the *Mayaguez*, on the high seas. In response, President Ford ordered U.S. Marine, naval, and air forces into action to rescue the ship and crew and launch retaliatory air strikes against the port of Kompong Som.

Kissinger's account of this "*Mayaguez* incident" includes a dozen vignettes sprinkled with maxims, asides, and a sobering litany of mishaps. William Colby, the beleaguered director of a demoralized Central Intelligence Agency, the target of sensational congressional hearings at the time, provides consistently inaccurate estimates as to the whereabouts of the ship and crew. A war-weary Pentagon stalls about mounting B-52 strikes from Guam and undertakes only two of the four strikes Ford had ordered against Kompong Som. Efforts to manage the crisis are constantly interrupted by previously scheduled trips and duties, including a black-tie dinner Ford hosted for Dutch prime minister Johannes den Uyl, who superciliously lectures his hosts on the inappropriateness of military force to "solve political problems" (p. 566). Ford and Kissinger, still in evening dress, then receive word that several dozen Marines have been killed, but the *Mayaguez* and its crew have been rescued. Though a small and symbolic victory in the context of recent defeats, Ford and his advisers rejoice, certain that a turning point had been reached.

Almost all the grand themes of Kissinger's volume are present in this episode, and Kissinger concludes, with his acute sense of irony, that after a decade of war to save all Southeast Asia from communism, the United States

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"had ended by rescuing a ship" (p. 575). And throughout, in the midst of the excitement and emotion, Kissinger kept his eye fixed on the broader ramifications: "Foreign policy knows no resting place and . . . its every success is usually an admission ticket to a new set of decisions" (p. 570). Only this time, the new set of decisions would not involve Vietnam. With the *Mayaguez*, the Indochina war was finally and forever over. The new set of decisions would involve the healing process and the lessons to be learned, and Kissinger remained at the center, closer to Ford than anyone else and clearly indispensable.

In the week of the *Mayaguez*, Kissinger left Washington on one of many speaking forays to set forth the lessons of Vietnam and his formula for the "healing process." First, he believed that the end in Vietnam meant the end of America's "unique relationship with history" stemming from America's prior sense of safety and uniqueness (p. 1061). In a word, Vietnam taught Americans to appreciate "complexity," and henceforth her aspirations would have to be realized in partnership with other nations. Secondly, among partners, compromise was necessary, and that meant a new era of limits in which peace was "not as a gift to be given but a service to be rendered for international stability and our own self interest" (p. 556). Hence the title, *Years of Renewal*, for Kissinger's account of the Ford years, the lengthy final volume of a trilogy on his eight years at the pinnacle of the U.S. government, and hence the tone and organization, which differ significantly from the earlier volumes treating the Nixon years. While all three volumes are replete with anecdotes, vignettes, and descriptions written in Kissinger's vivid and familiar style, the philosophical digressions are longer and the tone more argumentative in this last one.

The long interval between the appearance of this book and his second volume in 1982 accounts in part for these differences. The end of the Cold War has cast the diplomacy of the Kissinger era in an altogether new light, and Nixon's détente and triangular diplomacy, not to mention Vietnam policies, are almost universally criticized by the Right as well as the Left. Perhaps that is why Kissinger, in this book, seems less exuberant and less certain of the verdicts both contemporaries and future historians will render on his career.

Another reason for the difference in tone is that Kissinger's personal role changed radically after 1972. During Nixon's first term, Kissinger played a central but supporting part, rarely if ever venturing actions not carefully worked out with the president. Dominating a National Security Council (NSC) planning process invented in the 1968–69 transition, he was surely a key conceptualizer, but his distinctively "Kissingerian" concepts were subordinated to Nixon's pursuit of "peace with honor" in Vietnam. In any event, as Kissinger indicated in his book *Diplomacy* (1994), he strongly approved of Nixon's fundamental approach, even comparing his concept of the national interest to that underlying Teddy Roosevelt's foreign policy as opposed to that of Woodrow Wilson. But Kissinger's vision differed from Nixon's in emphasis if not purpose, and if Watergate had not intervened it seems likely that after the final Vietnam settlement in January 1973, Kissinger and Nixon might have gone their separate ways. Instead, because of Watergate, Kissinger gained an unprecedented opportunity to fashion foreign policy on his own.

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Within just ten weeks after the Paris accords, Nixon faced a full-blown domestic crisis over Watergate which soon absorbed the bulk of his time and energy. Even before the Senate hearings in June, it was becoming evident that the scandal was a fatal wound. In May, Nixon delegated responsibility over the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) to Kissinger, initiating an expanded role for Kissinger that increased after his appointment as secretary of state and grew even more rapidly following Gerald Ford's confirmation as vice president. Though none would say it out loud, the slow transition to Ford had begun; the Nixon era was over.

Interregnums have occurred before in American history, but rarely so early in a president's elected term, with so much at stake, and with so much responsibility placed on a single unelected individual. Kissinger describes how the "political establishment," concerned about the effects of Watergate, accepted "by tacit consensus" (p. 189) a role for him that amounted to a surrogate presidency. Indeed, for an interval beginning in the winter of 1974, Kissinger functioned as something even more important than surrogate. He was a quasi president in his own right and was accorded the kind of popularity and visibility typical of a president at the height of his powers. Kissinger's international stature—cemented by the Nobel Peace Prize—eclipsed every other foreign leader on the scene. And while Kissinger relinquished that authority in principle when Ford became president, he continued to exercise it in fact well into Ford's term, at the behest of the new president himself. For instance, Kissinger reprints a telegram he dispatched to the Shah of Iran dated March 10, 1975. He was protesting the shah's "brutal and indefensible" decision to strike a deal with Iraq and cut off the assistance Iran had been giving to the beleaguered Kurds. Dispensing with any reference to "the President's views," Kissinger writes in the first person: "With respect to the Kurdish question, there is little I can add to what I have already said to you personally during our recent meeting. . . . I will, of course, follow with great interest the evolution of Iraqi-Iranian relations and of Iraqi policy in your area generally and toward the Soviet Union in particular" (p. 594).

Indeed, *Years of Renewal*, with its orderly presentation, philosophical passages, and uplifting "reflections," resembles the memoir of a president such as Harry Truman more than that of a secretary of state such as Dean Acheson. And the title Kissinger selected indicates the basic task that absorbed his as well as Ford's attention from August 1974 onwards. The major innovations of the Nixon era—achieved at such cost—were all but complete, but still had to be consolidated. What was needed was a respite, a period of "repose" similar, perhaps, to the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars examined by Kissinger in his book *A World Restored*.[1] As a student of that era, Kissinger was well prepared to guide the major powers, and especially post-Vietnam America, towards a new "equilibrium" in the 1970s. According to Kissinger, equilibrium describes

[1] Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Castlereagh, Metternich, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). See p. 323.

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a stable international order in which all the major states are generally satisfied with the status quo. It presupposes the willingness not only to act in concert against revolutionary change, but to accept evolutionary change within a framework of order. And that, in turn, requires a modicum of domestic contentment within the great powers lest regime change render any of them revolutionary.

Kissinger strove for such an equilibrium, reasoning that the post-Vietnam international scene was essentially stable. Thanks to Nixon's opening to China and Beijing's admission to the United Nations, no major power was isolated. Thanks to the "tacit coalition" of all the non–Soviet bloc powers, the USSR was effectively deterred even as détente satisfied the Soviets' craving for legitimacy (p. 92). The only questionable building block, therefore, was . . . the United States itself. Traumatized by Vietnam and Watergate and susceptible to populist "enthusiasms" on the left and right of its politics, the United States might still prove to be a power unable or unwilling to play its required geopolitical role. That is why Kissinger's early efforts to assert U.S. leadership and, in Kissinger's words, "turn foreign policy into an act of healing," were so critical. The tasks of bringing about international and domestic "equilibrium" were deeply interwoven.

Kissinger's first major initiatives in 1974 involved the shoring up of relationships downgraded during the Vietnam era. NATO, which Kissinger had first tried to address in his abortive "year of Europe" (1973), was severely strained. The anti-Makarios coup in Greece in July 1974 raised the threat of war between Turkey and Greece to the destruction of NATO's southeastern flank. It also invited the insurgent Congress to intrude in foreign policy matters. A second major area neglected during the Vietnam era was the Middle East, which became Kissinger's prime focus of attention in the wake of the Yom Kippur war and the oil embargo. Latin America was a third region in which the United States could assert positive leadership in the interest of "healing" its foreign relationships, while at the same time rebuilding a bipartisan consensus at home. Unfortunately, as Kissinger feared, the patient refused his medicine. As early as August 1974 and increasingly thereafter, Kissinger's "equilibrium" came under attack by an entrenched wing of antiwar Democrats opposed to Kissinger's realism and U.S. engagement, and by the ascendant wing of "neoconservatives" led by Senator Henry Jackson, which challenged détente on the basis of human rights and concerns about the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance. Having previously enjoyed a kind of immunity from criticism, Kissinger was now obliged to mount a political defense against liberals, neoconservatives, and the establishment media. The result, in terms of these memoirs, is surprisingly counterintuitive. First, a Kissinger beset by often unfair assaults becomes an uncharacteristically sympathetic figure. Secondly, a Kissinger trying—and failing—to appeal to Americans' *better* natures punctures the caricatures of him as an amoral "Dr. Strangelove" or "modern Machiavelli."

That is because, as Kissinger shows in *A World Restored*, the equilibrium of nineteenth-century Europe, and his own twentieth-century version, had a palpable moral dimension. At the root of Kissinger's policies is a principled conservatism which resembles Edmund Burke's "legislative reason." Like Burke,

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Kissinger links freedom to order and liberty to restraint, and hence, Western freedoms flourish best in a climate of international stability. In principle, Kissinger opposes basing government policies on moral imperatives, a Wilsonian trait evident in both the antiwar Left and the neoconservatives. Both movements advanced variations of Wilson's "national faith" premised on American innocence and uniqueness. But misguided Wilsonianism was to blame in large part both for the Vietnam war and for the obstruction of his, Nixon's, and Ford's efforts to resolve it. As Kissinger put it forty years earlier, the most fundamental problem of politics "is not the control of wickedness, but the limitation of righteousness."[2]

But consolidation and order had an institutional as well as moral dimension. International and domestic stability required "legitimate" governments, which in the fall of 1974 meant a functioning president restored to the prerogatives of his office. By his own account, Kissinger recognized that the extraordinary role he had assumed in 1974 was a temporary expedient. The Vietnam controversies and Watergate had unduly weakened the presidency. In addition, Ford's unique status as a president who had not sought or been elected to national office was both an asset and a problem. Another precondition of renewal, therefore, was a gradual diminution of Kissinger's own role. And that accounts for yet another characteristic of this volume. Whereas Kissinger's first two volumes chronicle his personal rise, *Years of Renewal* chronicles a gradual process whereby Kissinger ceded power back.

That process is underway in earnest by the half-way point of the book and is dramatized by Ford's emergence at the Helsinki summit. Three months after Helsinki, Kissinger lost his NSC position in the "Halloween massacre," the shakeup prompted by Ford's decision to begin preparing for the 1976 election. Anticipating the contest with Ronald Reagan, Ford decided to put all major foreign policy initiatives "on hold," in effect viewing foreign policy to be a political liability. At the same time, the triangular diplomacy with Moscow and Beijing, Kissinger's bailiwick, had all but faded away. The de-emphasis of superpower negotiations began at the Ford-Brezhnev summit in Vladivostok, which not only failed to produce a durable SALT framework, but offended the Chinese, who concluded that the Americans would not stand up to the USSR as they had hoped. Kissinger's discussions with Mao Zedong in October 1975 are accordingly full of malaise. "We see that what you are doing is leaping to Moscow by way of our shoulders," charges Mao. "You see we are the fifth [of the major powers]. We are the small finger" (p. 883). A rupture is averted thanks to Ford's visit to Beijing in December. He assures the Chinese that the People's Republic stands under the American nuclear umbrella, whereupon the ailing Mao subsides. But Mao still concludes, "It seems to me at present there is nothing very much between our countries. . . . [P]robably this year, next year, and the year after there will not be anything great happening between our two countries" (p. 892). A month later, Kissinger, now demoted to the status of a

[2] Ibid., p. 206.

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"messenger," makes a final journey to Moscow that effectively marks the end of détente.

Kissinger's praise of Ford is unstinting throughout *Years of Renewal.* In fact, his portrait of Ford recalls his description of Castlereagh as "solid, ponderous, pragmatic . . . a plain dealer."[3] Kissinger characterizes Ford as perfectly suited to the task which Ford himself described as restoring "stability . . . to recover our economy, our energy situation and our position in the world" (quoted p. 391). Ford also emerges as decisive, principled, and—as a disciple of fellow Michigan Republican Arthur Vandenberg—a committed internationalist. Their working relationship was further enhanced by Ford's choice of Kissinger's original patron, Nelson Rockefeller, as vice president. Finally, even the election of the so-called McGovern Congress in November 1974 had a paradoxical silver lining. During the Watergate crisis, Congress had enacted a series of measures to curb the so-called Imperial Presidency that had allegedly usurped powers during the Cold War. In 1973 and 1974, Congress had already "reclaimed" powers by means of the War Powers Act, bills cutting off military aid to Turkey during the Cyprus crisis, and the Jackson-Vanik amendments to the 1974 Trade Act, which seriously damaged détente. The new "McGovern" Congress, bent on even more aggressive meddling, launched a "second Watergate" in early 1975, in the form of sensational investigations into alleged CIA illegalities and abuses. But Congress, under the sway of its most intransigent antiwar elements, overreached, permitting it to be outmaneuvered and checked decisively. The telling moment arrived when the communist offensive in Vietnam resumed in January 1975. Ford decided to back measures to restore military and economic aid for South Vietnam and Cambodia despite the long odds against those countries' survival, despite heavy media pressure and poll data against it, and despite the contrary advice of Ford's personal staff and the certainty that Congress would reject additional aid. He did so because picking a symbolic fight with Congress over the "abandonment" of allies was an effective and low-cost way of restoring the credibility of his office while obliging the neo-isolationist Congress to take the rap for defeat in Southeast Asia.

Viewed dispassionately, the U.S. military effort in Vietnam from 1969 onwards had never been waged to gain certain victory, but rather to demonstrate American reliability and a credible military posture in a region critical to the success of Nixon's China initiative. Once U.S. forces were withdrawn, not even Ford favored reentering the conflict. The question was simply whether the United States would aid South Vietnam to the extent permitted by the Paris accords in the face of massive communist violations, or "bug out." Thus, by stepping up on the issue of aid, Ford emerged as the champion of U.S. commitments—both legal and moral—and forced the congressional doves to take their contrary notion of what was "legal" and "moral" to its logical, disastrous conclusion. And Congress, instead of grudgingly approving Ford's requests, which might have proven to be too little and too late in any case, decided to

[3] Ibid., p. 30.

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accept Ford's challenge. Thus, the McGovernite Congress—over Ford's symbolic protest—"led" America out of Indochina and assumed the onus of forsaking two allies amidst the chilling scenes of Vietnamese refugees and Cambodia's disintegration. Ford's confrontation with Congress plainly suited Kissinger. Increasingly excoriated for his role in prolonging the suffering, Kissinger was sure that the communists were about to serve up far greater horrors that would expose the credulity and naiveté of the antiwar left. So it was, and in his book, Kissinger reprints excerpts from a dispatch filed from the field by his long-time critic, Sidney Schanberg of the *New York Times*, which typified mainstream media coverage at the time. Reporting from Cambodia in mid-March 1975, Schanberg minimized the chances that the imminent Khmer Rouge victory would be followed by a bloodbath, predicted a peaceful accommodation between the Cambodian parties, and profiled Khieu Samphan, a top communist leader, as an idealist with a reputation for "integrity" (pp. 503–4). Kissinger coolly concludes, "Debacles are rarely forgiven even if they arise from leaders carrying out the people's ostensible wishes" (p. 811). The McGovern Congress, in other words, had done the unforgivable.

In the ensuing *Mayaguez* affair, Ford was able to deal Congress out almost entirely, effectively nullifying the War Powers Act just eighteen months after its passage. To be sure, the liberal Congress pressed on, mounting a last stand in the controversy over "covert" aid to Angola later that year. But after May 1975, the McGovernite Congress gradually metamorphosed into a Jacksonite Congress, and almost all Ford's attention thereafter was focused on his problems with the resurgent Right.

Meanwhile, Kissinger was energetically engaged in "cabinet" diplomacy to save the equilibrium abroad. The final Indochina crisis coincided with an intense phase of Middle East "shuttle diplomacy" and Kissinger's strenuous efforts to unify the response of the oil-consuming Western powers facing the challenge of OPEC. Kissinger also adjusted rapidly to the arrival of a whole new cast of characters, including Yitzhak Rabin, Helmut Schmidt, Giscard d'Estaing, and Edmund Wilson, all of whom proved disposed to cooperate on the energy crisis, international finance, the Helsinki summit, the specter of "Eurocommunism," Angola, and other African issues. The solidarity NATO achieved in the wake of the Vietnam war thus set the stage for decades of cooperation, and the NATO summits of 1975–76 were a vital affirmation of American purpose and leadership.

The Helsinki conference, for instance, was to have been the crowning achievement of a *Soviet* diplomatic campaign to legitimize the partition of Germany and the communist grip on Eastern Europe. But thanks to NATO solidarity and the painstaking work of British, French, German, and American diplomats, the "Final Act" agreed upon by thirty-five heads of state at Helsinki in fact provided the "political space" for emergent dissident groups to demand that their communist regimes respect human rights and that the Soviets keep their hands off Eastern Europe. Almost as meaningful was the emergence of Ford. He was at the center of the conference, rebutting all talk of an America in retreat, sought out by his counterparts for private meetings, and dominating

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the plenary sessions while the dour and ailing Soviet delegates watched from their seats in the rear of the modernistic Finlandia hall.

The final sections of *Years of Renewal* are devoted to a list of new concerns indicative of America's awakening after its long national nightmare. To be sure, Kissinger's star is descending as he is stripped of his post as NSC adviser and loses control of SALT policy. China policy is on hold, and after the Israeli-Egyptian interim accord in September, Ford promises Rabin there will no more Middle East initiatives until after the 1976 election. Negotiations on the status of the Panama Canal are likewise postponed past the elections. But as late as 1976, Kissinger remains hyperactive, and his "shuttle" negotiations in Africa pave the way to majority rule in Southern Rhodesia (and ultimately South Africa), thereby defusing radical movements in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, Kissinger's talents are never better demonstrated, including his ability to empathize with others, his knack for bridging chasms, and his incredible stamina. These final forays connect Kissinger's notion of equilibrium to the future, demonstrating that his idea of stability is not an embrace of a rigid status quo or a "defeatist" rearguard fight against change, but rather a timely and practical accommodation to change for the mutual benefit of all. Thus, Kissinger does not drape himself in righteousness for ending white minority rule in southern Africa, but instead reminds the reader how close the Rhodesian crisis was to the South African one, which was directly linked to the Angolan crisis, which impacted NATO via Portugal's flirtation with "Eurocommunism," Latin American policy via the Cuban intervention in Angola, and East-West relations via Soviet and Chinese patronage of various factions there. In sum, to craft a foreign policy on moral grounds to the exclusion of pragmatism, interests, and geopolitics is itself immoral, because it is stupid. Those are my words, not Kissinger's, whose chosen tone in this final testament is, true to the title, healing rather than combative. And that is why, though some readers might complain about its overwhelming detail and occasional stretching of points to accommodate subsequent events, "Kissinger's third" is sure to cement his reputation as a statesman, not just a diplomat.

Crafting a foreign policy on moral grounds to the exclusion of pragmatism is itself immoral.

In *A World Restored*, Kissinger lauds Austria's Prince Metternich for brokering peace "coolly and unemotionally, arranging his combinations in an age increasingly conducting policy 'by causes.'"[4] He also wrote that "the test of a statesman . . . is his ability to recognize the real relation of forces and to make his knowledge serve his ends."[5] Those, it is fair to say, are the standards by which Kissinger would hope to be judged. Some may say that he failed by those very standards inasmuch as America in the 1990s has reverted to form. Wilsonianism is triumphant once again, and American foreign policy displays missionary qualities that recall those of the pre-Vietnam era. But decades will

[4] Ibid., p. 319.
[5] Ibid., p. 326.

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pass before Kissinger's career can be fully and fairly judged, which is something Kissinger probably understands as well as anyone. As he explained long ago, the statesman must bridge a gap between a people's experience and his own vision, hence "statesmen often share the fate of prophets. . . . Their greatness is usually apparent only in retrospect when their intuition has become experience."[6]

All in all, Kissinger's three volumes add up to an amazing story. The entire work runs roughly 4,000 pages, much longer than the Johnson-Nixon-Ford-Carter memoirs combined. But its length is commensurate with Kissinger's task, which is to chronicle the Vietnam era and extract its enduring lessons. In that sense, it resembles Churchill's multivolume work on World War II. Like Churchill, Kissinger treats in depth a period of grave international stress that casts in bold relief the challenges facing current Western leaders: how to reconcile democracy with power and discern the role of democracy in a radically changing world. Covering different eras, their themes are nonetheless similar, including the paradox of power, the "contingency and impermanence" of politics, the importance of personality in the shaping of history, and above all, the complexity involved in translating moral aims and values into practical actions that tangibly advance the cause of democracy. Both works emanate from perspectives based on earlier studies of European statesmanship, and both authors, thanks to their personal experiences with totalitarianism (namely, Nazi Germany), were imbued with a sense of the fragility of democracy and how much is riding on wise leadership.

Though in different times, Churchill and Kissinger also address the same audience—those who shape America's destiny, which in the final analysis determines the destinies of all Western nations. Both highlight the ambiguities of their times: Churchill explaining why the Allied victory of 1945 resulted in an uncertain peace and Kissinger describing how American leaders attempted to parlay the setback in Vietnam into a favorable and lasting peace. Both had faith in the capacities and "moral significance" of the United States,[7] but as Kissinger's account shows, altered circumstances rendered American society no longer immune from social and political schisms.

Kissinger's task as a writer is harder than Churchill's. His trilogy does not cover an inspirational triumph that is nostalgically recounted each night on the History Channel. Rather, it covers an era Americans still prefer to forget. Moreover, *Years of Renewal* appears at the height of what may be called the "Carville era," a time of superficial moralism, preoccupation with materialism, political correctness in all things, and political values pushed aside in favor of polls, focus groups, and media campaigns. Undeflected by it all, Kissinger has provided a vivid depiction of a critical era and a catalog of lessons that may yet prove prescient. But whatever his personal legacy, Kissinger's literary monument stands as a reminder that no matter how favored by fate and

[6] Ibid., p. 329.

[7] See Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 229.

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geography, America depends on creative leadership, an active and enlightened citizenry, and a commitment to the principles that inspire all great strivings and achievements.

Modernity and Its Discontents

by Paul Hollander

American Academia and the Survival of Marxist Ideas. By Dario Fernandez-Morera. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. 294 pp. $62.95.)

Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. By James C. Scott. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998. 444 pp. $37.50; $16.95, paper.)

Conquest and Cultures: An International History. By Thomas Sowell. (New York: Basic Books, 1998. 493 pp. $35.00.)

This reviewer has spent a large part of his professional and personal life trying to understand the antinomian or adversarial impulses among Western, and especially American, intellectuals and their susceptibility to questionable and often patently destructive ideas.[1] I tried to unearth some of the motives and circumstances that contributed to the rise and persistence of these attitudes and beliefs, including the central, animating conviction that American society has been the most unjust and morally corrupt in history. After almost three decades of thinking and writing about these matters, I remain bemused by the combination of embittered idealism and estrangement that underlie the recurring attachments to dubious ideas and theoretical remedies of the human condition.

From time to time these beliefs led to the (usually short-lived) admiration of political systems—especially those which described themselves as "communist" or "socialist"—that appeared to be desirable alternatives to the alleged corruptions of American society. The dominant notion of "communism," however, did not mean the designation Marx had reserved for the highest stage of socialism, which was ostensibly characterized by social harmony, material abundance, the withering away of the state, and the absence of social problems.

There was an easily discernible correlation between the intensity of the intellectuals' rejection of American society and their sympathy toward commu-

[1] See the author's *Political Pilgrims*, 4th ed. (1998), *Anti-Americanism*, 2nd ed. (1995), *Decline and Discontent* (1992), and *The Survival of the Adversarial Culture* (1988), all from Transaction Books, New Brunswick, N.J.

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nism. The first major American outburst of admiration for the USSR occurred during the Great Depression, when the crisis of capitalism appeared imminent and the true nature of Soviet communism was not yet apparent (at least to the intellectuals). The 1960s and early '70s, characterized by an unpopular war and a new preoccupation with racial injustice and sexual discrimination, inspired a second great wave of social criticism and admiration for communist states. Cuba, North Vietnam, and mainland China became paragons of political virtue in which, the sympathizers believed, the social injustices of capitalism had been eliminated, ethnic and racial discrimination effaced, and women liberated, all of which explained those societies' robust sense of purpose and social solidarity. Finally, during the 1980s, American intellectuals' hostility toward Ronald Reagan (and the alleged moral inequities associated with his administration) encouraged them to embrace the pro-Castro Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Then, in the late 1980s and early '90s, the "socialist commonwealth" collapsed like the proverbial house of cards. Nicaraguans voted out the Sandinistas; Ethiopians fought victoriously against their Soviet-backed communist regime; Eastern Europeans rid themselves, one after another, of their communist authorities; and, after the feeble coup attempt in August 1991, even the Soviet Union ceased to exist. In all these countries, academic departments of Marxism-Leninism were abolished as students and intellectuals alike scorned the ideas which used to be obligatory courses of study. As a result, since approximately the mid-1980s, the adversarial outlook of American intellectuals has taken new forms.[2] Without alternate political systems to idealize and counterpose to the inequities of the West (save impoverished Cuba and famine-plagued North Korea), the critics of the West have rushed to espouse postmodernism, anti-Western multiculturalism, and a diluted, eclectic, left-over Marxism.

Each of the seemingly disparate volumes discussed below addresses some of the intellectual or social-scientific misjudgments and misconceptions noted above. Fernandez-Morera examines the persisting influence of Marxism in our universities and its connection to the more trendy adversarial ideas of postmodernism and multiculturalism. Scott explores the impulses underlying large-scale, authoritarian social-engineering schemes and their failures and unintended consequences in various historical settings. Sowell's ambitious work (which a critic in *The New Republic* called an "irritating and challenging book") questions prevailing verities about development and underdevelopment and the sources of inequality between groups and nations.

It was not easy for Dario Fernandez-Morera to find a publisher for a book critical of Marxist, postmodernist ideas and their influence in American academic life. As he explains:

> Two Ivy League presses happened to lose the prospectus of the present book after keeping it for several months, only to turn down a second copy because it did not fit

[2] See Paul Hollander, "Introduction to the Transaction Edition: Anti-Americanism Reconsidered," in *Anti-Americanism*, pp. xx–xxxvi; also by the same author, "Reassessing the Adversary Culture," *Academic Questions*, Spring 1996, pp. 37–48.

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> "our present catalog of publications." Six other university presses rejected the prospectus for the same reason. Another university press turned it down because the press already had "too many literature titles. . . ." The editor of another Ivy League press . . . turned it down because his press was no longer publishing "this sort of material . . ." (p. 34).

Fernandez-Morera's study documents and ponders the implausible fact that, for large and influential groups of American academics, "Karl Marx's ideas remain preferred explanations of how the world works" (p. 1). The author notes that "a recent issue of the *Arts and Humanities Index* lists Marx and Lenin as the two most frequently cited sources in arts and humanities journals over a seven-year period" (p. 3). Such philosophical or ideological attachments reflect not merely the comfort of long-held beliefs (often acquired at an impressionable age), but also the power of less than rational longings and the determination to retain the attractive self-conception as a critic of society.

In the wake of the bankruptcy and collapse of the communist systems, Western Marxists unwilling to engage in a serious reexamination of their beliefs had one recourse: to insist that these systems had nothing whatsoever to do with the ideals of Marxism so that their collapse could not discredit them. Fernandez-Morera helps to recall that these intellectuals took a different position during the Cold War, when they tended to regard Soviet-style communist systems with a mixture of sympathy and restrained criticism. Those systems' imperfections were noted, but their moral superiority over capitalism was rarely questioned, nor their indebtedness to Marxism-Leninism. While many of these intellectuals came to perceive a moral equivalence between Soviet communism and American capitalist democracy, within that framework the sharpest critiques were reserved for the latter.

Among the interesting and original findings of *American Academia and the Survival of Marxist Ideas* is the similarity between collectivist thinkers of the Right (such as the truly fascist Giovanni Gentile) and the current crop of postmodernist Marxists who affirm the primacy of group identity. The affinities between contemporary American Marxist academics and the ideological functionaries of the former Soviet Union will be bothersome for those who have sought to distance themselves from the Soviet Union and its legacy. The major affinities lie not merely in the shared aversion to capitalism, but also in the embrace of a politicized relativism. To be sure, while orthodox Marxist relativism posits social class as the key relativizing variable (or determinant of all positions taken on social or moral issues), the current postmodernist Marxists swear by gender, race, and ethnicity as the key variables creating insurmountable obstacles to a shared understanding of the objective world. The currently favored forms of "the axiomatic subordination of consciousness to social being" (p. 17) are especially emphatic in the primacy of gender and race in shaping consciousness. These two approaches share the insistence that some *collectivity* determines or shapes decisively our beliefs and moral judgments.[3] The slogan "the personal

[3] An issue A. James Gregor explored in his *Contemporary Radical Ideologies* (New York: Random House, 1968).

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is political" embraced by radical feminists is one that Marxists and Leninists uphold just as enthusiastically. Collectivists of all persuasions unite in their hostility to privacy and in their desire to dilute the distinction between the private and the public. As Fernandez-Morera writes, both "Gentile and Trotsky demonstrated [that] the public good can be redefined to equal the individual's good in order to further justify sacrificing an individual or a group to the public good" (p. 29).

Such affinities between the old-line Soviet collectivists and certain present-day American academics also help to explain the similarity between the current pursuit of "role models" and the forgotten tenets of Soviet socialist realism. While at the present time writers and producers of television programs and textbooks are under pressure from the aggrieved victim groups (feminists, blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals, people with AIDS, and the disabled) to provide positive role models by portraying them in a flattering, dignified, or uplifting manner, writers in the former Soviet Union were enjoined to create positive heroes who personified the official political virtues and thus represented role models for all citizens.[4] Present-day advocates of role models also share with the Soviet literary commissars the conviction that art for art's sake is an abomination, that "ideas are weapons," and that novels, textbooks, or products of the mass media must perform a politically therapeutic function by raising sociopolitical consciousness.

In academia, elitism paradoxically coexists with egalitarianism.

Another similarity between Soviet collectivists and today's self-appointed advocates for politically correct victim groups may be found in their common efforts to relativize science, although the postmodernist aversion to science is far more profound than the old Marxist-Leninist variety, which did not regard science as a "social construction" barely distinguishable from tribal folklore or religious beliefs.

One is moved to ponder what may account for the continued attraction of these ideas? Is there something in the way of life of academic intellectuals or in the process of their self-selection that contributes to their disposition? There is some truth in the venerable stereotype of the academic intellectual living in a largely self-contained world that reduces contact with many forms of social reality. It is a way of life that encourages a certain elitism paradoxically coexisting with egalitarian convictions. Intellectuals in the humanities and social sciences, moreover, are rarely held accountable for their ideas and often preserve their reputation untarnished in spite of stunning misjudgments. As Fernandez-Morera writes, "Professors are in effect protected from both the unintended and intended consequences of their thought . . ." (p. 180). While such impunity is certainly a desirable part of academic freedom, perhaps even a precondition of it, it may also be conducive to a degree of irresponsibility.

While the way of life associated with being an academic intellectual and a critic of society helps to explain this phenomenon, it is likely that

[4] Abram Terz, *On Socialist Realism* (New York: Pantheon, 1960); Paul Hollander, "Models of Behavior in Stalinist Literature," *American Sociological Review*, June 1966, pp. 352–64.

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self-selection to the ranks of the social critics provides further explanation. Those attracted to the intellectual's role, and especially its social-critical dimension, may choose it for personal reasons. Increasingly, intellectuals have assumed the moralizing social roles which in past centuries were reserved for the clergy.[5]

It is now intellectuals who make sweeping pronouncements (in books, articles, on television, the lecture circuit, in commencement speeches, and in their classrooms) about good and evil, justice and injustice, morality and immorality, the failure of their society to live up to its noble ideas, and even the true hollowness of its apparently noble ideas. Moralizing and social criticism go together: intellectuals critical of social corruption and injustice see themselves as principled critics of public wrongdoing. By "fearlessly" exposing corruption in high places or dwelling on the intractable contradictions of the social system, they set themselves apart from whatever is ignoble and contemptible. The critics are voices in the moral wilderness (or so they believe), although these voices have increasingly coalesced into a highly standardized, predictable, often lucrative, and risk-free industry of social criticism. It is further possible that the type of people here discussed share a disposition to discontent which is personal in origin but social and political in its consequences. This is not to say that a sense of personal grievance cannot be helpful in heightening awareness of broader injustices.

Fernandez-Morera's book can make for difficult reading because he was obliged to acquaint the reader with the jargon-laden, obscure, and tedium-inducing writings of the academics he criticized. While it is hard to dispute the main finding of the book, namely, the popularity of Marxist and postmodernist ideas in contemporary American academic institutions, it would have benefited from a clarifying discussion of the origins and evolution of the relationship between Marxism and postmodernism. Furthermore, a question not addressed is how much these beliefs matter in the larger social context. This volume nevertheless represents a valuable and rare contribution to understanding contemporary American academic life and the mindset of an influential group of academic intellectuals.

Modernist Dystopias

James C. Scott's *Seeing Like a State* is an original attempt to uncover similarities among a variety of social engineering schemes undertaken mainly in this century. It is inspired by a major tradition of the social-scientific enterprise: the desire to demonstrate that seemingly disparate phenomena are in fact quite similar to one another and connected by underlying attributes not visible to the untrained eye. But this is an orientation that can be overdone. Many disparate

[5] See "American Intellectuals: Producers and Consumers of Social Criticism," in *The Survival of the Adversarial Culture*, pp. 139–66.

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phenomena are in fact different and unconnected to one another, as will be more fully discussed below.

The subtitle sums up the findings: "How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed." Unhappily, the main title is awkward, uninformative, and grammatically jarring since "states" obviously do not "see." It is also somewhat misleading because the book is not limited to states, but includes the vision of architects, urban planners, foresters, and agronomists. It is a mystery why this title was chosen and how it got by the book's editors.

The recurring notion of "high modernism" is the conceptual backbone of the book. It is far from clear why the author prefers it to the well-established and widely understood concept of "social engineering" (to which he often reverts) or even to the plain old "modernity" or "modernization." We learn that

> high modernism [is] . . . best conceived as a strong . . . version of the beliefs in scientific and technical progress that were associated with industrialization in Western Europe and in North America from roughly 1830 until World War I. At its center was a supreme self-confidence about continued linear progress, the development of scientific and technical knowledge, the expansion of production, the rational design of social order, the growing satisfaction of human needs and . . . an increasing control over nature (including human nature) commensurate with scientific understanding of natural laws. High modernism is thus a particularly sweeping vision of how benefits of technical and scientific progress might be applied—usually by the state in every field of human activity (pp. 89–90).

Professor Scott further affirms that "the high-modernist faith" has a "completely ecumenical character" one may "encounter in . . . various guises in colonial development schemes, planned urban centers in both the East and the West, collectivised farms, the large development plans of the World Bank, the resettlement of nomadic populations, and the management of workers on factory floors" (p. 342).

It may be clear by now that the problem with the term is precisely its ecumenical nature, its failure to distinguish adequately between sweeping, ideologically inspired schemes of state-imposed social engineering and far less ambitious technocratic undertakings often unrelated to the exercise of political power. The Soviet collectivization of agriculture, Pol Pot's attempted remodelling of Cambodia, and Mao's "Great Leap Forward" are simply not comparable to the modernization of agricultural production in the United States or scientific forestry management in France or Germany, which may be promoted either by government or private business.

The urban planning of Le Corbusier and his followers is also among the examples of high modernism. Although these schemes were linked to state power and its glorification, they were limited undertakings compared with those of Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, or the lesser-known rulers of communist Ethiopia and their disastrous, politically inspired agrarian "reforms." While there is some similarity between the latter schemes and the ideals of Le Corbusier—who aspired to plan for what he saw as "the basic needs of his fellow men" (p. 115) and who shared with political revolutionaries a serene indifference to the wishes and preferences of empirical human beings—his powers were limited

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to designing a few public buildings and spaces. Moreover, communist states such as the Soviet Union or China under Mao were not particularly interested in the kind of modern architecture or town planning associated with Le Corbusier. The Soviet Union in particular favored a kind of Stalinist, neo-Victorian architecture and did not initiate "a completely fresh start" (p. 115) as far as the arts and architecture were concerned. In fact, because the Soviet system after the 1920s increasingly promoted elements and aspects of Russian cultural and political tradition, characterizing it as high modernist is somewhat misleading and certainly not evocative of its essence.

Apparently it was the author's aspiration to discover some grand scheme that would tie together disparate types of social or quasi-social engineering (if indeed scientific forestry management and agriculture fall under this heading at all). But there is a fundamental difference between the attempts and the inspiration of American (or colonial) agribusiness seeking to rationalize agricultural production and Stalin's or Mao's attempts to transform society. The similarities between Lenin and Le Corbusier (for example, pp. 147, 157) are likewise overdone, notwithstanding a shared elitism. Chairman Mao and the nineteenth-century utopian industrialist Robert Owen are both credited with having had "the same vision" and belief that people were completely malleable (p. 341).

Thus, it is a defining flaw of this book that fundamental differences among various social, economic, and political projects of transformation are insufficiently articulated and disparate high-modernist activities and aspirations are lumped together. What also seems to lurk behind these efforts to force divergent impulses and schemes of improvement into the procrustean theoretical bed of high modernism is reminiscent of the now-defunct "convergence theory" and even more that of "moral equivalence" between the United States and USSR, or West and East.

Also overlooked is the fundamental and morally significant difference between the aspiration to reorder nature and the (only apparently) corresponding aspiration to transform societies, institutions, and even human nature itself. The latter was the explicit ambition of twentieth-century political utopias which sought to fashion a "new" human being. There is little discernible continuity between the nonpolitical and nonideological efforts to transform and exploit nature and the politically inspired schemes of social engineering in which the transformation of nature envisaged is incidental to the prime goal of changing human beings and their way of life. Let us consider the following statement:

> I believe that many of the most tragic episodes of state development in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries originate in a particularly pernicious combination of three elements. The first is the aspiration to the administrative ordering of nature and society, an aspiration . . . at work in scientific forestry. . . . "High modernism" . . . was shared by many across a wide spectrum of political ideologies. Its main carriers and exponents were the avant-garde among engineers, planners, technocrats, high-level administrators, architects, scientists and visionaries. . . . [A] pantheon of high-modernist figures . . . would almost certainly include . . . Saint-Simon, Le Corbusier, Walther Rathenau, Robert McNamara, Robert Moses, Jean Monnet, the Shah of Iran, David Lilienthal, Lenin, Trotsky and Julius Nyerere. They envisioned sweeping, rational

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> engineering of all aspects of social life in order to improve the human condition . . . . The second element is the unrestrained use of the power of the modern state as an instrument for achieving these designs. The third element is a weakened or prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans (pp. 88–89).

Surely McNamara, Moses, Monnet, Lilienthal, and even Le Corbusier not only had far more limited aspirations for changing and improving the human condition than Lenin, Trotsky, or Pol Pot, they also lacked "the unrestrained use of the power of the modern state." Finally, the former did not operate in a "prostrate" civil society—not even Lilienthal, who was associated with Roosevelt-era public work projects in the aftermath of the Depression of the 1930s. The latter, need one say, was not comparable in its social, political, or economic consequences to the conflicts in Russia, China, or Cambodia that preceded the rise of massive, state-sponsored schemes of social engineering.

The limitations of the scheme entailed in high modernism are further revealed when the author refers to Soviet collectivization and the *ujamaa* villages in Tanzania as "two notorious schemes of agrarian simplification" (p. 184)—a simplification itself. Those projects cannot be reduced to mere attempts to increase agricultural production; both were deeply rooted in hostility to private property and in beliefs about the proper organization of human communities. For the same reason, seeking and finding parallels between Soviet collective farms and large American farms is a dubious exercise, notwithstanding some limited technological similarities. The short-lived admiration of the Soviet farms on the part of a handful of American visitors (p. 200) hardly proved or illustrated the alleged similarities; such visitors were favorably predisposed to admire everything they were obliged to see on their meticulously organized tours.

Large-scale, state-imposed central planning was inherently incapable of anticipating contingencies, comprehending social needs, or envisaging the multiplicity of measures and decisions their satisfaction required. More than that, the economic plans of the socialist states misdiagnosed or willfully disregarded many human needs and refused to plan for their satisfaction. The collectivization of agriculture in particular sought to impose a system that ignored local conditions and traditional skills, knowledge, and experience, in favor of "more general, abstract knowledge deployed by the state and its technical agencies" (p. 311). But collectivization also failed because it destroyed incentives and violated deeply held values, including attachment to private property and an aversion to regimentation.

Despite the flaws noted above, the book does explain convincingly (if somewhat repetitively) why state planning in general and the large-scale social engineering in agriculture in particular did not work in the now-defunct socialist countries. The author makes clear that the schemes discussed "have typically taken their most destructive human and natural toll in the states of the former socialist bloc and in evolutionary Third World settings" (p. 342), and he also observes that belief in a private sphere of activity and liberal ideas and institutions provide obstacles to "high modernist planning" (p. 101). Documenting and refocusing attention on the disastrous, unintended consequences of social

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engineering is an enlightening and worthwhile undertaking. Unfortunately, the lack of a bibliography makes a quick survey of the sources difficult. The book would also have been significantly improved by a more discriminating and searching look at the diverse ideological, philosophical, or political inspirations of these schemes and how and whether they were related to the apolitical scientific-technocratic impulses associated with modernism.

The Centrality of Culture

Thomas Sowell's *Conquests and Cultures* is the last in a trilogy of volumes which share the underlying theme that

> racial, ethnic and national groups have their own respective cultures, without which their economic and social histories cannot be understood. Modest as this claim may seem, it collides head-on with more widely accepted visions in which minority groups are determined by 'society' around them, which society is therefore both causally and morally responsible for the misfortunes peculiar to the less fortunate of these groups . . . (p. ix).

In what amounts to a comparative history of selected conquests and their consequences in four parts of the world (Britain, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Western Hemisphere), Sowell proceeds to violate numerous prevailing norms of political correctness. He does not celebrate all cultures and is willing to rank them on ethical, cognitive, technical, and scientific grounds; he does not subscribe to the currently dominant view that "all unfavorable conclusions about any group" can be dismissed as racism or prejudice (p. 365). He esteems both the uniqueness of Western scientific accomplishments and of Western moral ideas, which actually provide the vocabulary and concepts currently used in the sweeping condemnation of the West. He reminds the reader of some remarkable discrepancies in productivity and scientific inventiveness in different parts of the world. For example:

> By the late twentieth century it was estimated that 17% of the world's population produced four-fifths of its total output . . . in 1994 it was estimated that 36 million "overseas Chinese" . . . produced as much wealth as the one billion people living in China. . . . Among Southeast Asian nations output per capita in 1996 ranged from $107 in Myanmar to $30,860 in Singapore. . . . [In the middle of the twentieth century] the United States . . . alone produced more than 80% of the major inventions, discoveries and innovations. . . .
>
> . . . [L]arge productivity differences are associated with similarly striking differences in income and wealth, [and] this mundane fact deflates widespread beliefs that, among both nations and individuals, the rich are richer because the poor are poor . . . (p. 330).

Sowell boldly suggests that European colonial domination of Africa was not all bad. Nor does he recoil from noting that American Indians also committed atrocities against settlers and one another, thereby challenging the conventional

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wisdom that they led idyllic lives prior to the arrival of the Europeans. He shows that conquests in general have contributed to the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and "cultural capital."

In explaining differences between cultures, creativity, and development, he takes into account matters often neglected, such as the physical environment and geography. The latter, he argues, played a particularly negative role on the African continent. By employing a long historical view, Sowell is able to point out that the discrepancies between the wealth, power, and global standing of nations are far from immutable and often associated with what he calls the "transfers of human capital" from one culture or nation to another. Under "human capital" he subsumes skills, work habits, institutional arrangements (such as the rule of law), and general social and political traditions conducive to the production of wealth (p. 342). But conditions for the transfer of human capital are not uniformly favorable. For example, "the economic achievements of Europe were . . . not readily transferable to Africa, partly because of the severe geographical and climatic handicaps . . ." (p. 172). On the other hand, "some of the most remarkable examples of rapid advancement have come from peoples painfully aware of their own backwardness . . ." (p. 341). Sowell cautions against confusing the idea of human capital with formal education. The latter may have unintended consequences such as the overproduction of university graduates without skills their society needs. The presence of such "overeducated" groups often led to the expansion of government bureaucracy, as in tsarist Russia and more recently in the Third World. He also points out the rarely noted fact that intellectuals have often been in the forefront of nationalistic agitation conducive to political conflict.

Why did some groups develop certain kinds of human capital, but others did not?

In comparing different cultures, Sowell's focus is the "matters of competing efficacy" and the capacity for wealth creation rather than collective self-esteem or "pride in ancient achievements" (p. 341). He doubts that national or group pride is the essential foundation for either collective or individual achievements or excellence. At the end he returns to the central idea of the book, namely, that "those wishing to see groups rise from poverty need to know what factors produce prosperity. . . . [G]roups experiencing discrimination . . . have often risen economically . . . above other groups not subject to discrimination . . ." (pp. 373–74). Such socioeconomic progression often occurred before racial or ethnic hostilities were overcome. Rather than campaigns of "consciousness raising," it was economic advancement and social mobility that overcame or reduced prejudice and stereotyping.

Sowell does not believe that Europeans have done better economically, politically, and culturally because of some innate gift or superiority. But he does not explain why in the first place some groups but not others developed certain types of human capital (the borrowing of which helps to reduce global inequalities) and what factors other than the physical environment have been responsible for the vast differences among ethnic groups and nations. Perhaps because of his focus on wealth production as the prime differentiating factor

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among groups and nations, the reader, while much enlightened about the connections between conquests and cultures, will be left wondering about the ultimate mysteries of uneven development and the differences among groups of human beings.

Taken together, these books expose numerous consequential and strongly held misconceptions of our times. But in doing so they may dampen optimism about human rationality, tolerance, the ability to learn from mistakes, and the capacity to find a measure of satisfaction in a world that will forever remain complex, frustrating, and hard to make meaningful.

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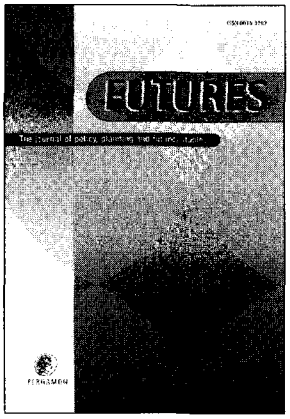

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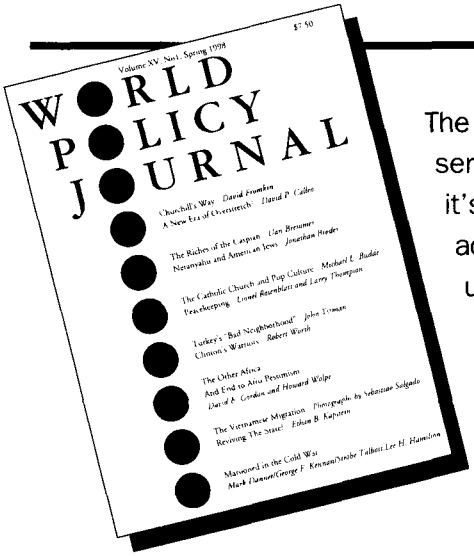
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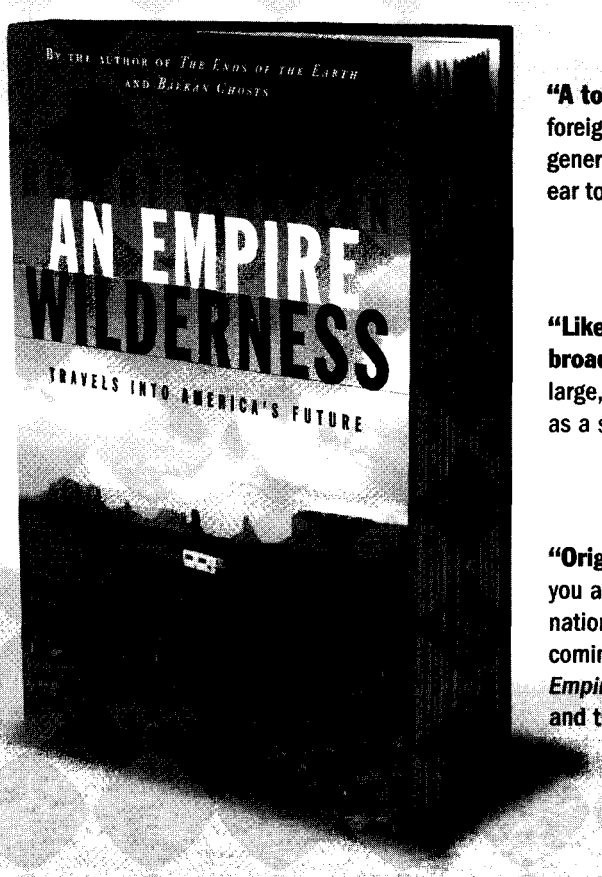

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